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THE

VERACITY

OF THE

GOSPELS & ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

ARGUED FROM THE

UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES

TO BE FOUND IN THEM, WHEN COMPARED

1. WITH EACH OTHER,—AND 2. WITH JOSEPHUS.

BY THE REV. J. J. BLUNT,
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VERACITY

BOSTON:

PREFACE.

THE following pages consist, in part, of the substance of two Sermons which I had last year occasion to deliver from the University Pulpit in Cambridge, the one in English, the other in Latin, exhibiting *Undesigned Coincidences* between the several writings of the Evangelists, or between those writings and Josephus. The materials, which might be considered supplementary to Lardner and Paley, I had collected, from time to time, as independent arguments for the Veracity of the Gospels and Acts, without any determinate purpose in so doing, beyond my own immediate satisfaction. Thoughts which have been thus progressively accumulating, I cannot now always trace to their beginnings, however I may desire it. But an attentive perusal of the New Testament, and of the Jewish Historian, has furnished me with nearly all of them. At the same time, it is possible that a hint from a commentator may have suggested one; that another I may have met with, originally applied to a different purpose, though here made subservient to the Evidences; that a third may, without my recollecting it, have been already urged under a similar form, and for the same object. Yet much which was strictly my own, I have carefully suppressed, where I found that I had been anticipated; and what I have retained, I believe to be, in the

main, new, and I trust that it will not be thought unimportant. Of any great profit or praise to accrue to myself from a work so brief and unpretending, I have little hope or expectation; abundantly shall I be satisfied if it should chance to give pause (of which I do not altogether despair) to the scoffer or unbeliever, though it be only to one—if it should lead him to reconsider a subject, of all others, the most weighty that can occupy the thoughts of a reasonable being—if it should induce him to make himself better acquainted with such works as the "Credibility of the Gospel History," the "Horæ Paulinæ," or (what is indeed of another and more profound character) the "Analogy" of Bishop Butler—before he comes to a final conclusion on a point which the grave may convince him he had never examined with the attention it deserved, or in any other spirit than such as would have frustrated the effect of all testimony whatever.

FIRST SECTION.

CONTAINING UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES BETWEEN THE SEVERAL WRITINGS OF THE EVANGELISTS.

By a comparison of the several writings of the Evangelists with one another, I think *coincidence without design* may be discovered in so many instances, as to go very far indeed towards fixing the truth of those writings on a foundation that cannot be shaken. On the nature of this argument I shall not much enlarge, but refer my readers for a general view of it to the short dissertation prefixed to the Horæ Paulinæ of Paley, a work where it is employed as a test of the veracity of St. Paul's Epistles with singular felicity and force, and for which suitable incidents were certainly much more abundant than those which my present subject provides; still, however, if the instances which I can offer are so numerous and of such a kind as to preclude the possibility of their being the effect

of accident, it is enough. It does not require many circumstantial coincidences to determine the mind of a jury as to the credibility of a witness in our courts, even where the life of a fellow-creature is at stake. I say this, not as a matter of charge, but as a matter of fact, indicating the authority which attaches to this species of evidence, and the confidence universally entertained that it cannot deceive. Neither should it be forgotten, that an argument thus popular, thus applicable to the affairs of common life as a test of truth, derives no small value, when enlisted in the cause of Christianity, from the readiness with which it is apprehended and admitted by mankind at large.

2. Nor is this all. The argument derived from coincidence without design has further claims, because, if well made out, it establishes the Evangelists as *independent* witnesses to the facts they relate; and this, whether they consulted each other's writings, as some maintain, or not; for the coincidences, if good for any thing, are such as *could not* result from combination, mutual understanding, or arrangement. If any which I may bring forward may seem to be such as might have so arisen, they are only to be reckoned ill chosen, and dismissed. *Undesignedness* must be

apparent in them, or they are not to the purpose. In our argument we defy four men to sit down together, to transmit their writings from one to another, and produce the like. Truths known independently or each of them, must be at the bottom of documents having such discrepancies and such agreements as these in question. The point, therefore, whether the Evangelists have or have not copied from one another, which has been so much labored, is thus rendered a matter of comparative indifference. Let them have so done, as the adversaries of Christianity might be disposed to insist, still by our argument would their independence be secured, and the nature of their testimony be shown to be such as could only result from their separate knowledge of substantial facts.

3. I will add another consideration which seems to me to deserve serious attention:—that in *several instances the probable truth of a miracle is involved in the coincidence.* This is a point which we should distinguish from the general drift of the argument itself. The general drift of our argument is this, that when we see the writers of the Gospels clearly telling the truth in those cases where we have the means of *checking* their accounts,—

when we see that they are artless, consistent, veracious writers, where we have the opportunity of examining the fact, it is reasonable to believe that they are telling the truth in those cases where we have not the means of checking them,—that they are veracious where we have not the means of putting them to the proof. But the argument I am now pressing is distinct from this. We are hereby called upon, not merely to assent that St. Matthew and St. Luke (for example) speak the truth when they record a miracle, because we know them to speak the truth in many other matters, (though this would be only reasonable, where there is no impeachment of their veracity whatever,) but we are called upon to believe a *particular* miracle, *because the very circumstances which attend it furnish the coincidence.* I look upon this as a point of very great importance, and I am therefore pleased that my first coincidence in order, happens to be one of this description.

I.

In the fourth chapter of St. Matthew we read thus:—"And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon call-

ed Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, *mending their nets;* and he called them, and they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."

Now let us compare this with the fifth chapter of St. Luke. "And it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the Word of God, he stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake, but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all

the night and taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when he had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and *their net brake;* and they beckoned to their partners which were in the other ship that they should come and help them; and they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord; for he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him."

The narrative of St. Luke may be reckoned the supplement to that of St. Matthew; for that both relate to the same event I think indisputable. In both we are told of the circumstances under which Andrew, Peter, James and John became the decided followers of Christ; in both they are called to attend him in the same terms, and those remarkable and technical terms; in both the scene is the

same, the grouping of the parties the same, and the obedience to the summons the same. By comparing the two Evangelists, the history may be thus completed:—Jesus teaches the people out of Peter's boat, to avoid the press; the boat of Zebedee and his sons, meanwhile, standing by the lake a little further on. The sermon ended, Jesus orders Peter to thrust out, and the miraculous draught of fishes ensues. Peter's boat not sufficing for the fish, he beckons to his partners, Zebedee and his companions, who were in the other ship. The vessels are both filled and pulled to the shore; and now Jesus, having convinced Peter and Andrew by his preaching and the miracle which he had wrought, gives them the call. He then goes on to Zebedee and his sons, who having brought their boat to land were mending their nets, and calls them. Such is the whole transaction, not to be gathered from one, but from both the Evangelists. The circumstance to be remarked, therefore, is this: that of the miracle, St. Matthew says not a single word; nevertheless, he tells us, that Zebedee and his sons were found by our Lord, when he gave them the call, "*mending their nets.*" How it happened that the nets wanted mending he does

not think it needful to state, nor should we have thought it needful to inquire, but it is impossible not to observe, that it perfectly harmonizes with the incident mentioned by St. Luke, that in the miraculous draught of fishes the *nets brake*. This coincidence, slight as it is, seems to me to bear upon the truth of the miracle itself. For the "mending of the nets," asserted by one Evangelist, gives probability to the "breaking of the nets," mentioned by the other—the breaking of the nets gives probability to the large draught of fishes—the large draught of fishes gives probability to the miracle. I do not mean that the coincidence *proves* the miracle, but that it marks an attention to truth in the Evangelists; for it surely would be an extravagant refinement to suppose, that St. Matthew designedly lets fall the fact of the mending of the nets, whilst he suppresses the miracle, in order to confirm the credit of St. Luke, who, in relating the miracle, says, that through it the nets brake.

Besides, though St. Matthew does not record the miraculous draught, *yet the readiness of the several disciples on this occasion to follow Jesus*, (a thing which he does record,) agrees, no less than the mending of the nets,

with that extraordinary event; for what more natural than that men should leave all for a Master whose powers were so commanding?

II.

MATT. iv. 21.—"And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship *with Zebedee their father*."

Ch. viii. 21.—"And another of his *disciples* said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and *bury my father*."

Ch. xx. 20.—"Then came to him the *mother of Zebedee's children*, with her sons, worshipping him and desiring a certain thing of him."

Ch. xxvii. 55.—"And many women were there, beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him. Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and *the mother of Zebedee's children*."

WHEN the coincidence which I shall found upon these passages first occurred to me, I felt some doubt whether, by producing it, I might not subject myself to a charge of over-

refinement. On further consideration, however, I am satisfied that the conjecture I hazard (for it is nothing more) is far from improbable, and I am the less disposed to withhold it from having observed, when I have chanced to discuss any of these paragraphs with my friends, how differently the importance of an argument is estimated by different minds; a point of evidence often inducing conviction in one, which another would find almost nugatory.

Whoever reads the four verses which I have given at the head of this Number in juxtaposition, will probably anticipate what I have to say. The coincidence here is not between several writers, but between several detached passages of the same writer. From the first of these verses it appears that, at the period when James and John received the call to follow Christ, *Zebedee their father was alive.* They obeyed the call, and left him. From the two last verses it appears, in my opinion, that, at a subsequent period of which they treat, *Zebedee was dead.* Zebedee does not make the application to Christ on behalf of his sons, but the *mother of Zebedee's children* makes it. Zebedee is not at the crucifixion, but the *mother of Zebedee's children.* It is

not from his absence on these occasions that I so much infer his death, as from the expression applied to Salome; she is not called the wife of Zebedee, she is not called the mother of James and John, but the *mother of Zebedee's children.* The term, I think, implies that she was a widow.

Now from the second verse, which relates to a period *between these two*, we learn that one of Jesus' disciples asked him permission "*to go and bury his father.*" The interval was a short one; the number of persons, to whom the name of *disciple* was given, was very small (see Matt. ix. 37); a single boat seems to have contained them all (viii. 23). In that number we know that the sons of Zebedee were included. My inference therefore is, that the death of *Zebedee* is here alluded to, and that St. Matthew, without a wish, perhaps, or thought, either to conceal or express the individual, (for there seems no assignable motive for his studying to do either,) betrays an event familiar to his own mind, in that inadvertent and unobtrusive manner in which the truth so often comes out.

The data, it must be confessed, are not enough to determine the matter with certainty

either way; it is a *conjectural* coincidence. They who are not satisfied with it may pass it over: I am persuaded, however, that nothing is wanted but the discovery of a fifth or sixth Gospel to multiply such proofs of veracity as these I am collecting to a great extent. It is impossible to examine the historical parts of the New Testament in detail, without suspicions constantly arising of facts, which, nevertheless, cannot be substantiated for want of documents. We have very often a glimpse, and no more. A hint is dropped relating to something well known at the time, and which is not without its value even now in evidence, by giving us to understand that it is a fragment of some real story, of which we are not in full possession. Of this nature is the circumstance recorded by St. Mark, (xiv. 51,) that when the disciples forsook Jesus, "there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young men laid hold of him; and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." This is evidently an imperfect history. It is an incident altogether detached, and alone: another Gospel might give us the supplement, and together with that supplement indications of its truth. Meanwhile let us but apply

ourselves diligently to comparing together the four witnesses which we have, instead of indulging a fruitless desire for more; and if consistency without design, be a proof that they are "true men," I cannot but consider that it is abundantly supplied.

III.

MATT. viii. 14.—"And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his *wife's mother* laid, and sick of a fever."

THE coincidence which I have here to mention does not strictly fall within my plan, for it results from a comparison of St. Matthew with St. Paul; if, however, it be thought of any value, the irregularity of its introduction will be easily overlooked.

In this passage of the Evangelist, then, by the merest accident in the world, we discover that Peter was a *married* man. It is a circumstance that has nothing whatever to do with the narrative, but is a gratuitous piece of information, conveyed incidentally in the designation of an individual who was the subject of a miracle.

But that Peter actually was a married man, we learn from the independent testimony of St. Paul: "Have we not power," says he, "to lead about a sister, a *wife*, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and *Cephas?*" 1 Cor. ix. 5. Here again, be it observed, as in the former instance, the indication of veracity in the apostle's narrative, is found where the subject of the narrative is a miracle; for Christ having "touched her hand, the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them." *v.* 15.

I cannot but think that any candid skeptic would consider this coincidence to be at least decisive of the *actual existence* of such a woman as Peter's wife's mother; of its being no imaginary character, no mere person of straw, introduced with an air of precision, under the view of giving a color of truth to the miracle. Yet, unless the Evangelist had felt quite sure of his ground—quite sure, I mean, that this remarkable cure would bear examination, it is scarcely to be believed that he would have fixed it upon an individual who certainly did live, or had lived, and who therefore might herself, or her friends might for her, contradict the alleged fact, if it never had occurred.

IV.

MATT. ix. 9.—"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me; and he arose and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat *in the house*, behold many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him."

How natural for a man speaking of a transaction which concerned himself, to forget for a moment the character of the historian, and to talk of Jesus sitting down in *the* house; without telling his readers whose house it was! How natural for him not to perceive that there was vagueness and obscurity in a term, which to himself was definite and plain! Accordingly we find St. Mark and St. Luke, who deal with the same incident as historians, not as principals, using a different form of expression. "And as he passed by," says St. Mark, "he saw Levi, the son of Alpheus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me: and he arose and followed him.

And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in *his* house," ii. 15.

" And Levi," says St. Luke, " made him a great feast in *his own* house," v. 29.

It may be further remarked, that a number of *publicans* sat down with Jesus and his disciples upon this occasion ; a fact for which no reason is assigned, but for which we discover a very good reason in the occupation which St. Matthew had followed.

I think the odds are very great against the probability of a writer preserving consistency in trifles like these, were he only *devising* a story. I can scarcely imagine that such a person would hit upon the phrase " in *the* house," as an artful way of suggesting that the house was in fact his own, and himself an eye-witness of the scene he described ; still less, that he would refine yet further, and make the company assembled there to consist of publicans, in order that the whole picture might be complete and harmonious.

V.

AKIN to this is my next instance* of consistency without design. Matt. x. 2. "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: the first Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; *Thomas*, and *Matthew the publican*; James, the son of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him."

This order, as far as regards Thomas and Matthew, is inverted in St. Mark and St. Luke. "Philip and Bartholomew, and *Matthew and Thomas*," is the succession of the names in those two Evangelists, (Mark, iii. 18. Luke, vi. 15,) and by neither of them is the odious, but distinctive, appellation of "the publican" added. This difference, however, in St. Matthew's catalogue, from that given by St. Mark and St. Luke, is precisely such as

* In this argument I am indebted to Nelson, (Festivals and Fasts, p. 229,) who advances it, however, for a different end, to prove the *humility*, not the *veracity* of St. Matthew.

might be expected from a modest man when telling his own tale: he places his own name after that of a colleague who had no claims to precedence, but rather the contrary; and, fearful that its obscurity might render it insufficient merely to announce it, and, at the same time, perhaps, not unwilling to inflict upon himself an act of self-humiliation, he annexes to it his former calling, which was notorious at least, however it might be unpopular. I should not be disposed to lay great stress upon this example of undesigned consistency were it a solitary instance, but when taken in conjunction with so many others, it may be allowed a place; for, though the order of names and the annexed epithet might be accidental, yet it must be admitted, that they would be accounted for at least as well by the veracity of the narrative.

VI

MATT. xii. 46.—"While he yet talked, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, *desiring to speak with him.*"

WHAT his mother's communication might be, the Evangelist does not record. It seems to

have been made privately and apart, and was probably not overheard by any of his followers. But, in the next chapter, St. Matthew very undesignedly mentions, that "when he *was come into his own country*, he taught them in the synagogue," xiii. 54. Hence then we see, that the interview with his mother and brethren was shortly succeeded by a visit to their town. The visit might, indeed, have nothing to do with the interview, nor does St. Matthew hint that it had any thing whatever to do with it, (for then no argument of veracity, founded upon the *undesigned* coincidence of the two facts, could have been here advanced,) but still there is a fair presumption that the visit was in obedience to his mother's wish, more especially as the disposition of the inhabitants of Nazareth, which must have been known to Christ, was unfit for his doing there any mighty works.

VII.

THE *death of Joseph* is nowhere either mentioned, or alluded to, by the Evangelists; yet, *from all four of them, it may be indirectly inferred to have happened whilst Christ was yet alive;* a circumstance in which, had they been

imposing a story upon us, they would scarcely have concurred, when the concurrence is manifestly not the effect of scheme or contrivance. Thus in the passage from St. Matthew, quoted in the last paragraph, we find his mother and brethren seeking Jesus, but not his reputed father. In St. Mark we have the whole family enumerated, but no mention made of Joseph. "Is not this the Carpenter? the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" vi. 3.

"Then came to him," says St. Luke, "his mother and brethren, and could not come at him for the press," viii. 19. "After this," says St. John, "he went down to Capernaum; he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples," ii. 12.

Neither do we meet with any notice of Joseph's attendance at the Feast of Cana, or at the crucifixion; indeed, in his last moments, Jesus commends his mother to the care of the disciple whom he loved, and that "disciple took her to his own home."

Such a harmony as this cannot have been the effect of concert. It is not a direct, or even an incidental agreement in a positive fact, for nothing is asserted; but yet, from

the absence of assertion, a presumption of such fact is conveyed to us by the separate narrative of each of the Evangelists.

VIII.

MATT. xiv. 1.—"At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said *unto his servants*, (*τοῖς παισὶν αὐτοῦ*,) This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead."

ST. MATTHEW here declares, that Herod delivered his opinion of Christ *to his servants*. There must have been some particular reason, one would imagine, to induce him to make such a communication to them above all other people. What could it have been? St. Mark does not help us to solve the question, for he contents himself with recording what Herod said. Neither does St. Luke, in the parallel passage, tell us to whom he addressed himself—"he was desirous of seeing him, because he had *heard many things of him*." By referring, however, to the 8th chapter of this last Evangelist, the cause why Herod had *heard so much about Christ*, and why he talked to *his servants* about him, is sufficiently

explained, but it is by the merest accident. We are there informed, "that Jesus went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with him, and certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils; and *Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward*, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."

And again, in chap. xiii. *v.* 1, of the Acts of the apostles, we read, amongst other distinguished converts, of "*Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch*," or, in other words, who was his foster-brother. We see, therefore, that Christ had followers from amongst the household of this very prince, and, accordingly, that Herod was very likely to discourse with *his servants* on a subject in which they were better informed than himself.

IX.

We do not read a great deal respecting Herod the Tetrarch in the Evangelists; but all that is said of him will be perceived, on examina-

tion, (for it may not strike us at first sight,) to be perfectly harmonious.

When the disciples had forgotten to take bread with them in the boat, our Lord warns them to "take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of *the leaven of Herod.*" So says St. Mark, viii. 15. The charge which Jesus gives them on this occasion is thus worded by St. Matthew, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and *of the Sadducees,*" xvi. 6. The obvious inference to be drawn from the two passages is, that Herod himself was a Sadducee. Let us turn to St. Luke, and though still we find no assertion to this effect, he would clearly lead us to the same conclusion. Chap. ix. 7, "Now Herod the Tetrarch heard of all that was done by him; *and he was perplexed, because it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;* and of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets *was risen again.* And Herod said, *John have I beheaded,* but who is this of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him."

The transmigration of the souls of good men was a popular belief at that time amongst the Pharisees; (see Josephus, B. J. ii. 83. 14.)

a Pharisee, therefore, would have found little difficulty in this resurrection of John, or of an old prophet; in fact, it was the Pharisees, no doubt, who started the idea: not so Herod, he was *perplexed* about it; he had "beheaded John," which was in his creed the termination of his existence; well then might he ask, "Who is this, of whom I hear such things?" Neither do I discover any objection in the parallel passage of St. Matthew, xiv. 1. "At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him." It is the language of a man, (especially when taken in connexion with St. Luke,) who began to doubt whether he was right in his Sadducean notions. A guilty conscience awaking in him some apprehension that he whom he had murdered might be alive again, that there might, after all, be a "resurrection, and angel, and spirit."

X.

MATT. xxvi. 67.—"Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, *Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?*"

I THINK undesignedness may be traced in this passage, both in what is expressed and what is omitted. It is usual for one, who invents a story which he wishes to have believed, to be careful that its several parts hang well together—to make its conclusions follow from its premises—and to show how they follow. He naturally considers that he shall be suspected unless his account is probable and consistent, and he labors to provide against that suspicion. On the other hand, he, who is telling the truth, is apt to state his facts and leave them to their fate: he speaks as one having authority, and cares not about the why or the wherefore, because it never occurs to him that such particulars are wanted to make his statement credible; and accordingly, if such particulars are discoverable at all, it is most commonly by inference, and incidentally.

Now in the verse of St. Matthew placed at the head of this paragraph, it is written that "they smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" Had it happened that the records of the other Evangelists had been lost, no critical acuteness could have possibly supplied by conjecture the omission which occurs in this passage, and yet, without that omission being supplied, the true meaning of the passage must forever have lain hid; for where is the propriety of asking Christ to *prophesy* who smote him, when he had the offender before his eyes? But when we learn from St. Luke (xxii. 64) that "the men that held Jesus *blindfolded* him" before they asked him to prophesy who it was that smote him, we discover what St. Matthew intended to communicate, namely, that they proposed this test of his divine mission, whether, without the use of sight, he could tell who it was that struck him. Such an oversight as this in St. Matthew it is difficult to account for on any other supposition than the truth of the history itself, which set its author above all solicitude about securing the reception of his conclusions by a cautious display of the grounds whereon they were built.

XI.

WHAT was the charge on which the Jews condemned Christ to death?*

FAMILIAR as this question may at first seem, the answer is not so obvious as might be supposed. By a careful perusal of the trial of our Lord as described by the several Evangelists, it will be found that the charges were two, of a nature quite distinct, and *preferred with a most appropriate reference to the tribunals before which they were made.*

Thus the first hearing was before "*the Chief Priests and all the Council,*" a Jewish and ecclesiastical court; accordingly, Christ was then accused of *blasphemy.* "I adjure thee, by the living God, tell me whether thou be the *Son of God,*" said Caiaphas to him, in the hope of convicting him out of his own mouth. When Jesus in his reply answered that he was, "then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, *He hath spoken blasphemy;*

* The following argument was suggested to me by reading "Wilson's Illustration of the method of Explaining the New Testament by the Early Opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ."

what further need have we of witnesses? behold now ye have heard his blasphemy." (Matt. xxvi. 65.)

Shortly after, he is taken before *Pilate, the Roman governor*, and here the charge of blasphemy is altogether suppressed, and that of *sedition* substituted. "And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate: and they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow *perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king.*" (Luke, xxiii. 2.) And on this plea it is that they press his conviction, reminding Pilate, that if he let him go, he was not Cæsar's friend.

This difference in the nature of the accusation, according to the quality and character of the judges, is not *forced* upon our notice by the Evangelists, as though they were anxious to give an air of probability to their narrative by such circumspection and attention to propriety: on the contrary, it is touched upon in so cursory and unemphatic a manner, as to be easily overlooked; and, I venture to say, that it is actually overlooked by most readers of the Gospels. Indeed, how perfectly agreeable to the temper of the times, and of the parties concerned, such a proceeding was, can

scarcely be perceived at first sight. The coincidence, therefore, will appear more striking if we examine it somewhat more closely. A charge of *blasphemy* was, of all others, the best fitted to detach the *multitude* from the cause of Christ; and it is only by a proper regard to this circumstance, that we can obtain the true key to the conflicting sentiments of the *people* towards him; one while hailing him, as they do, with rapture, and then again striving to put him to death.

Thus when Jesus walked in Solomon's porch, the Jews came round about him and said unto him, "If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.—Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not." He then goes on to speak of the works which testified of him, and adds, in conclusion, "I and my Father are one." The effect of which words was instantly this, that the *Jews* (i. e. the people) took up stones to stone him, "for blasphemy, and because, being a man, he made himself God." (John, x. 33.) Again, in the sixth chapter of St. John, we read of five thousand men, who, having witnessed his miracles, actually acknowledged him as "that prophet that should come into the world," nay, even wished to take him by force and make him a

king: yet the very next day, when Christ said to these same people, "This is that bread which came down from heaven," they murmured at him, doubtless considering him to lay claim to divinity; for he replies, "Doth this offend you? what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up *where he was before?*" Expressions, at which such serious offence was taken, that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked with him no more." So that it is not in these days only that men forsake Christ from a reluctance to acknowledge (as he demands of them) his godhead. And again—when Jesus cured the impotent man on the Sabbath day, and in defending himself for having so done, said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," we are told, "therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." (John, v. 18.) So, on another occasion, when Jesus had been speaking with much severity in the temple, we find him unmolested, till he adds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, *I am.*" (John, viii. 58.) But no sooner had he so said, than "they took up stones to cast at him." In like manner, (to

come to the last scene of his mortal life,) when he entered Jerusalem he had the people in his favor; for the chief priests and scribes "feared them:" yet, very shortly after, the tide was so turned against him, that the same people asked Barabbas rather than Jesus. And why? As *Messiah* they were anxious to receive him, which was the character in which he had entered Jerusalem—but they rejected him as the "*Son of God*," which was the character in which he stood before them at his trial: facts which, taken in a *doctrinal* view, are of no small value, proving, as they do, that the Jews believed *Christ to lay claim to divinity*, however they might dispute or deny the right. It is consistent, therefore, with the whole tenor of the Gospel history, that the enemies of Christ, to gain their end with the Jews, should have actually accused him of *blasphemy*, as they are represented to have done, and should have succeeded. Nor is it less consistent with that history, that they should have actually waved the charge of blasphemy, when they brought him before a Roman magistrate, and substituted that of *sedition* in its stead; for the Roman governors, it is well known, were very indifferent about religious disputes—they had the tolera-

tion of men who had no creed of their own. Gallio, we hear in after-times, "cared for none of these things;" and, in the same spirit, Lysias writes to Felix about Paul, that "he perceived him to be accused *of questions concerning their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.*" (Acts, xxiii. 29.)

It may be remarked, that this is not so much a casual coincidence between parallel passages of several Evangelists, as an instance of singular, but undesigned harmony, amongst the various component parts of one piece of history which they all record; the proceedings before two very different tribunals being represented in a manner the most agreeable to the known prejudices of all the parties concerned.

XII.

MATT. xxvi. 71.—"And when he was gone out *into the Porch* (τὸν πυλῶνα), another maid saw him, and said unto them, This man was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

How came it to pass that Peter, a stranger, who had entered the house in the night, and

under circumstances of some tumult and disorder, was thus singled out by the *maid in the Porch?*

Let us turn to St. John, (ch. xviii. *v.* 16,) and we shall find, that, after Jesus had entered, "Peter stood *at the door without*, till that other disciple went out which was known unto the high-priest, and *spake unto her that kept the door*, and brought in Peter." Thus was the attention of that girl directed to Peter, (a fact of which St. Matthew gives no hint whatever,) and thus we see how it happened that he was recognized in *the Porch.* Here is a minute indication of veracity in St. Matthew, which would have been lost upon us, had not the Gospel of St. John come down to our times;—and how many similar indications may be hid, from a want of other cotemporary histories with which to make a comparison, it is impossible to conjecture.

XIII.

My next instance of coincidence without design is taken from the account of certain circumstances attending the feeding of the five thousand. And here again, be it remarked,

an indication of veracity is found, as formerly, *where the subject of his narrative is a miracle.*

In the sixth chapter of St. Mark, we are told, that Jesus said to his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, (it was there where the miracle was wrought,) and *rest awhile;* for there were many," adds the Evangelist, by way of accounting for this temporary seclusion, "*coming and going*, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." How it happened that so many were coming and going through Capernaum at that time, above all others, this Evangelist does not give us the slightest hint; neither how it came to pass, that, by retiring for a *while*, Jesus and his disciples would escape the inconvenience. Turn we then to the parallel passage in St. John, and there we shall find the matter explained at once, though certainly this explanation could never have been given with a reference to the very casual expression of St. Mark. In St. John we do not meet with one word about Jesus retiring for *a while* into the desert, for the purpose of being apart, or that he would have been put to any inconvenience by staying at Capernaum; but we are told, (what

perfectly agrees with these two circumstances,) that "*the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh,*" vi. *v.* 4. Hence, then, the "coming and going" through Capernaum was so unusually great; and hence, if Jesus and his disciples rested in the desert "a while," the crowd, which was pressing towards Jerusalem from every part of the country, would have subsided, and drawn off to the capital.

The confusion which prevailed throughout the Holy Land at this great festival we may easily imagine, when we read in Josephus,* that, for the satisfaction of Nero, his officer Cestius, on one occasion, endeavored to reckon up the number of those who shared in the national rite at Jerusalem. By counting the victims sacrificed, and allowing a company of ten to each victim, he found that nearly two millions six hundred thousand souls were present; and it may be observed, that this method of calculation would not include the many persons who must have been disqualified from actually partaking of the sacrifice, by the places of their birth and the various causes of uncleanness.

I cannot forbear remarking another incident in the transaction we are now considering; in

* Bel. Jud. vi. 9. § 3.

itself a trifle, but not, perhaps, on that account, less fit for corroborating the history. We read in St. John, that when Jesus had reached this desert place, he "lifted up his eyes, and saw a great multitude come unto him, and he said unto *Philip*, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" vi. 5. Why should this question have been directed to Philip in particular? If we had the Gospel of St. John, and not the other gospels, we should see no peculiar propriety in this choice, and should probably assign it to accident. If we had the other gospels, and not that of St. John, we should not be put upon the inquiry, for they make no mention of the question having been addressed expressly to *Philip*. But, by comparing St. Luke with St. John, we discover the reason at once. By St. Luke, and by him alone, we are informed, that the desert place where the miracle was wrought "*was belonging to Bethsaida*." (ix. 10.) By St. John we are informed, (though not in the passage where he relates the miracle, which is worthy of remark, but in another chapter altogether independent of it, ch. i. 44,) that "*Philip was of Bethsaida*." To whom, then, could the question have been directed so properly as to him, who, being

of the immediate neighborhood, was the most likely to know where bread was to be bought? Here again, then, I maintain, we have strong indications of veracity in the case of a miracle itself; and I leave it to others, who may have ingenuity and inclination for the task, to weed out the falsehood of the miracle from the manifest reality of the circumstances which attend it, to separate fiction from fact, which is in the very closest combination with it, whilst, for my own part, I am content to give God thanks for having afforded such evidence of these wonderful works, as makes it an easy task, not to see, and yet to believe.

XIV.

MARK, XV. 21.—"And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and *Rufus*, to bear his cross."

CLEMENT of Alexandria, who lived about the end of the second century, declares that Mark wrote this Gospel on St. Peter's authority, *at Rome*. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, says, that Mark, the disciple and inter-

preter of St. Peter, being requested by his brethren *at Rome*, wrote a short Gospel. (See Michaelis, v. iii. p. 208, 9.

Now this circumstance may account for his designating Simon as the *father of Rufus* at least; for we find that a disciple of that name, and of considerable note, was resident *at Rome*, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. "*Salute Rufus*," says he, "*chosen in the Lord*," xvi. 13. Thus, by mentioning a man living upon the spot where he was writing, and amongst the people whom he addressed, Mark was giving a reference for the truth of his narrative, which must have been accessible and satisfactory to all; since Rufus could not have failed knowing the particulars of the crucifixion, (the great event to which the Christians looked,) when his father had been so intimately concerned in it, as to have been the reluctant bearer of the cross.

Of course, the force of this argument depends on the identity of the Rufus of St. Mark and the Rufus of St. Paul, which I have no means of proving;* but, admitting it to be probable that they were the same persons, (which, I think, may be admitted; for St. Paul, we see, expressly speaks of a distinguished

* See Michaelis, v. iii. p. 213.

disciple of the name of Rufus, at Rome; and St. Mark, writing for the Romans, mentions Rufus, the son of Simon, as well known to them,) admitting this, the coincidence is striking, and serves to account for what otherwise seems a piece of purely gratuitous and needless information offered by St. Mark to his readers, namely, that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus; a fact omitted by the other Evangelists, and apparently turned to no advantage by himself.

XV.

MARK, XV. 25.—"And it was the *third* hour, and they crucified him." 33.—"And when the *sixth* hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land till the *ninth* hour."

IT has been observed to me by an intelligent friend, who has turned his attention to the internal evidence of the Gospels, that it will be found, on examination, that the scoffs and insults which were levelled at our Saviour on the cross, *were all during the first three hours of the crucifixion;* and that a manifest change

of feeling towards him, arising, as it should seem, from a certain misgiving as to his character, is discoverable in the by-standers after the expiration of those three hours: I think the remark just and valuable. It is within the first three hours that we read of those "who passed by, railing on him and wagging their heads," Mark, xv. 29; of "the chief priests and scribes mocking him," 31; of "those that were crucified with him reviling him," 32; of the "soldiers mocking him, and offering him vinegar," Luke, xxiii. 36, pointing out to him, most likely, the "vessel of vinegar which was set," or holding a portion of it beyond his reach, by way of aggravating the pains of intense thirst which must have attended this lingering mode of death:—that all this occurred during the first three hours of the Passion, is the natural conclusion to be drawn from the narratives of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke.

But, during the last three hours, we hear nothing of this kind; on the contrary, when Jesus cried, "I thirst," there was no mockery offered, but a sponge was filled with vinegar, and put on a reed and applied to his lips, with remarkable alacrity: "*one ran*" and did it, Mark, xv. 36: and, from the misunderstand-

ing of the words "Eli, Eli," it is clear that the spectators had some suspicion that Elias might come to take him down. Do not, then, these circumstances accord remarkably well with the alleged fact, that "*there was darkness over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour?*" Matt. xxvii. 45. Mark, xv. 33. Is not this change of conduct in the merciless crew that surrounded the cross very naturally explained, by the awe with which they contemplated the gloom that prevailed? and does it not strongly, though undesignedly, confirm the assertion, that such a fearful darkness there actually was?

XVI.

LUKE, ix. 53.—"And they did not receive him, because his face *was as though he would go to Jerusalem.*"

CHRIST was then going to the passover at Jerusalem, and was therefore plainly acknowledging that men ought to worship *there*, contrary to the practice of the Samaritans, who had set up the temple at Gerizim in opposition to that of the Holy City. That this

was the cause of irritation, is implied in the expression, that they would not receive him, "*because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.*" Let us observe, then, how perfectly this account harmonizes with that which St. John gives of Christ's interview with the woman of Samaria, at the well. Then Christ was coming *from* Judea, and at a season of the year when no suspicion could attach to him of having been at Jerusalem for devotional purposes, for it wanted "four months before the harvest should come," and with it the passover. Accordingly, on this occasion, Christ and his disciples were treated with civility and hospitality by the Samaritans. They purchased bread in the town, without being exposed to any insults, and they were even requested to tarry with them.

I cannot but think that the stamp of truth is very visible in all this. It was natural that at certain seasons of the year (at the great feasts) this jealous spirit should be excited, which at others might be dormant; and, though it is not expressly stated by the one Evangelist, that the insult of the villagers was at a season when it might be expected, yet, from a casual expression, (*v.* 51,) such may be inferred to have been the case. And,

though it is not expressly stated by the other Evangelist, that the hospitality of the Samaritans was exercised at a more propitious season of the year, yet, by an equally casual expression in the course of the chapter, (*v.* 35,) that, too, is ascertained to have been the fact. Surely it is beyond the reach of the most artful imposture, to observe so strict a propriety even in the subordinate parts of the scheme; especially where less distinctness of detail would scarcely have excited suspicion; and surely it is a circumstance most satisfactory to every reasonable mind to discover, that the evidence of the truth of that Gospel (on which our hopes are anchored) is, not only the more conspicuous the more minutely it is examined, but that, without such examination, full justice cannot be done to the variety and pregnancy of its proofs.

XVII.

JOHN, vi. 16.—"And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum; and it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to

them: and *the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.* So when they had rowed about five-and-twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship, and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:)* when the people, therefore, saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*"

MATT. xiv. 22.—"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: *for the wind was contrary.*"

IT appears from St. John, that the people thought Jesus was still on the side of the lake where the miracle had been wrought. And this they inferred, because there was no other boat on the preceding evening, except that in which the disciples had gone over to Capernaum on the other side, and they had observed that Jesus went not with them. It is added, however, that, "*there came other boats from Tiberias,*" (which was on the same side as Capernaum,) nigh unto the place where the Lord had given thanks. Now, why might they not have supposed that Jesus had availed himself of one of these return-boats, and so made his escape in the night. St. John gives no reason why they did not make this obvious inference. Let us turn to St. Matthew's ac-

count of the same transaction, (which I have placed at the head of this paragraph,) and we speedily learn why they *could* not. In this account we find it recorded, not simply, that the disciples were in distress in consequence of the sea arising "by reason of a great wind that blew," but it is further stated that "*the wind was contrary*," i. e. the wind was blowing *from* Capernaum and Tiberias, and therefore not only might the ships readily come from Tiberias, (the incident mentioned by St. John,) a course for which the wind (though violent,) was fair, but the multitude might well conclude that with such a wind Christ *could not* have used one of those return-boats, and therefore must still be amongst them.

Indeed, nothing can be more probable than that these ships from Tiberias were fishing vessels, which, having been overtaken by the storm, suffered themselves to be driven before the gale, to the opposite coast, where they might find shelter for the night; so that here again is another instance of undesigned consistency in the narrative; the very fact of a number of boats resorting to this "desert place," at the close of day, strongly indicating (though not incidentally,) that the sea actually

was rising, (as St. John asserts,) "by reason of a great wind that blew."

I further think this to be the correct view of a passage of some intricacy, from considering, 1st, the question which the people put to Christ on finding him at Capernaum the next day. Full as they must have been of the miracle which they had lately witnessed, and anxious to see the repetition of works so wonderful, their first inquiry is, "*Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*" Surely an inquiry, not of mere form, but manifestly implying, that, under the circumstances, it could only have been by some extraordinary means that he had passed across; and, 2d, from observing the satisfactory explanation it affords of the parenthesis of St. John, "*howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias,*" . . . . which no longer seems a piece of purely gratuitous and irrelevant information, but turns out to be equivalent with the expression in St. Matthew, that "*the wind was contrary;*" though the point is not directly asserted, but only a fact is mentioned from which such an assertion naturally follows.

It might indeed be said, that the circumstance of the ships coming from Tiberias was mentioned for the purpose of explaining how

the people could take shipping, (as they are stated to have done, to go to Capernaum,) when it had been before affirmed that there was no other boat there, save that into which the disciples were entered; such caution, however, I do not think at all agreeable to the spirit of the writings of the Evangelists, who are always very careless about consequences, not troubling themselves to obviate or explain the difficulties of their narrative. But, whatever may be judged of this matter, the main argument remains the same, and a minute coincidence between St. John and St. Matthew is made out, of such a nature as precludes all suspicion of collusion, and shows consistency in the two histories, without the smallest design.

And here again, I will repeat the observation which I have already had occasion more than once to make—that the truth of the general narrative in some degree involves the truth of a *miracle*. For if we are satisfied by the undesigned coincidence, that St. Matthew was certainly speaking truth when he said, the wind was "boisterous," how shall we presume to assert, that he speaks truth no longer, when he tells us in the same breath, that Jesus "walked on the sea," in the midst

of that very storm, and that when "he came into the ship the wind ceased?"

Doubtless, the one fact does not absolutely *prove* the others, but in all *ordinary* cases, where one or two particulars in a body of evidence are so corroborated, as to be placed above suspicion, the rest, though not admitting of the like corroboration, are nevertheless received without dispute.

XVIII.

JOHN, xviii. 10.—"Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. *The servant's name was Malchus.*"

15.—"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: *that disciple was known unto the high priest*, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

16.—"But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high priest, *and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.*"

In my present argument, it will be needful to show, in the first instance, that "the disciple who was known unto the high priest," mentioned in *v.* 15, was probably the Evangelist himself. This I conclude from three considerations :—

1. From the testimony of the fathers, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Jerom.*

2. From the circumstance that St. John often unquestionably speaks of himself in the third person in a similar manner. Thus, chap. xx. 2, "Then she runneth and *cometh to the disciple whom Jesus loved*," and *v.* 3. "Peter therefore went forth, and *that other disciple.*" The like phrase is repeated several times in the same chapter, and elsewhere.

3. The narrative of the motions of "that disciple who was known unto the high priest," his coming out and going in, is so express and circumstantial, that it bears every appearance of having been written by the *party himself.* Nor in fact do any other of the Evangelists mention a syllable about "that other disciple :" they tell us indeed, that Peter did enter the high priest's house; but they take no notice of the particulars of his

* See Lardner's History of the Apostles and Evangelists, ch. ix.

admission, nor how it was effected, nor of any obstacles thrown in the way.

For these reasons, I understand the disciple known unto the high priest, to have been St. John. My argument now stands thus. The assault committed by Peter is mentioned by all the Evangelists, *but the name of the servant is given by St. John only.* How does this happen? Most naturally; for it seems, that by some chance or other, St. John was known not only unto the high priest, but also to his household—that the servants were acquainted with him, and he with them; since he was permitted to enter into the high priest's house, whilst Peter was shut out; and no sooner did he "speak unto her that kept the door," than Peter was admitted. So again, in further proof of the same thing, when another of the servants charges Peter with being one of Christ's disciples, St. John adds a circumstance peculiar to himself, and marking his knowledge of the family, that "*it was his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off.*"

These facts, I conceive, show that St. John (on the supposition that St. John and the "other disciple" are one and the same) was personally acquainted with the servants of the high priest. How natural, therefore, was it,

that in mentioning such an incident as Peter's attack upon one of those servants, he should mention the man by name, and the "*servant's name was Malchus*," whilst the other Evangelists, to whom the sufferer was an individual in whom they took no extraordinary interest, were satisfied with a general designation of him, as "one of the servants of the high priest."

This incident also in some degree, though not in the same degree perhaps as certain others which have been mentioned, supports the miracle which ensues. For, if the argument shows that the Evangelists are uttering the truth when they say that such an event occurred as the blow with the sword—if it shows *that there actually was such a blow struck;* then is there not additional ground for believing that they continue to tell the truth, when they say in the same passage that the effects of the blow were miraculously removed, and that the ear was healed?

I am aware that there are those who argue for the superior rank and station of St. John, from his being known unto the high priest; and who may, therefore, think him degraded by this implied familiarity with his servants. Suffice it however to say,—that as, on the one

hand, to be known to the high priest does not determine that he was his equal, so, on the other, to be known to his servants does not determine that he was not their superior: furthermore, that the relation in which servants stood towards their betters was, in ancient times, one of much less distance than at present; and, lastly, that the Scriptures themselves lay no claim to dignity of birth for this Apostle, when they represent of him and of St. Peter, (Acts, iv. 13,) that Annas and the elders, after hearing their defence, "perceived them to be unlearned and ignorant men."

XIX.

JOHN, xviii. 36.—"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, *then would my servants fight*, that I should not be delivered to the Jews."

NOTHING could have been more natural than for his enemies to have reminded our Lord, that in one instance, at least, and that too of very recent occurrence, his *servants did fight*. Indeed, Jesus himself might here be almost

thought to challenge inquiry into the assault Peter had so lately committed upon the servant of the high priest. Assuredly, there was no disposition on the part of his accusers to spare him. The council *sought* for witness against Jesus; and where could it be found more readily than in the high priest's own house? Frivolous and unfounded calumnies of all sorts were brought forward, which agreed not together; but this act of violence, indisputably committed by one of his companions, in his Master's cause, and, as they would not have scrupled to assert, under his Master's eye, is altogether and intentionally, as it should seem, kept out of sight.

Had the Gospel of St. Luke never come down to us, it would have remained a difficulty, (one of the many difficulties of Scripture arising from the conciseness and desultory nature of his narrative,) to have accounted for the suppression of a charge against Jesus, which of all others would have been the most likely to suggest itself to his prosecutors, from the offence having been just committed, and from the sufferer being one of the high priest's own family; a charge moreover which would have had the advantage of being founded in truth, and would therefore have been far more

effective than accusations which could not be sustained. Let us hear, however, St. Luke. He tells us, and he only, that when the blow had been struck, Jesus said, "Suffer ye thus far: and he *touched his ear and healed him.*" (xxii. 51.)

The miracle satisfactorily explains the suppression of the charge—to have advanced it would naturally have led to an investigation that would have more than frustrated the malicious purpose it was meant to serve. It would have proved too much. It might have furnished, indeed, an argument against the peaceable professions of Christ's party; but, at the same time, it would have made manifest his own compassionate nature, submission to the laws, and extraordinary powers. Pilate who sought occasion to release him, might have readily found it in a circumstance so well calculated to convince him of the innocence of the prisoner, and of his being (what he evidently suspected and feared) something more than human.

XX.

JOHN, XX. 4.—"So they ran both together; and *the other disciple did outrun Peter*, and came first to the sepulchre.

5.—"And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet *went he not in.*

6.—"Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, *and went into the sepulchre*, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7.—"And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8.—"*Then went in also that other disciple* which came first to the sepulchre."

How express and circumstantial is this narrative! How difficult it is to read it, and doubt for a moment of its perfect truth! My more immediate concern, however, with the passage is this, that it affords two coincidences, certainly very trifling in themselves, but still signs of veracity:—1. *St. John outran St. Peter.* It is universally agreed by ecclesiastical writers of antiquity, that John was the *youngest* of all the Apostles. That Peter was

at this time past the vigor of his age, may perhaps be inferred from an expression in the twenty-first chapter of St. John—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee," says Jesus to Peter, "*when thou wast young*, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."—v. 18. Or, (what may be more satisfactory) there being every reason to believe that St. John survived St. Peter six or seven and thirty years,* it almost necessarily follows that he must have been much the younger man of the two, since the term of St. Peter's natural life was probably not very much forestalled by his martyrdom.† Accordingly, when they ran both together to the sepulchre, it was to be expected that John should *outrun his more aged companion, and come there first.*

I do not propose this as a new light: but I am not aware that it has been brought so prominently forward as it deserves. An incident thus trivial and minute, disarms suspicion. The most skeptical cannot see cunning or con-

* See Lardner's History of the Apostles and Evangelists, ch. ix. sect. 6, and ch. xviii. sect. 5.

† Consult 2 Ep. Peter, i. 14, and John, xxi. 18.

trivance in it—and it is no small point gained over such persons, to lead them to distrust and re-examine their bold conclusions. This little fact may be the sharp end of the wedge that shall by degrees cleave their doubts asunder.—Seeing this, they may by and by "see greater things than these." But this is not all;—for, 2dly, though John came first to the sepulchre, *he did not venture to go in till Peter set him the example.* Peter did not pause "to stoop down" and "look in," but boldly entered at once. He was not troubled for fear of seeing a spirit, which was probably the feeling that withheld St. John from entering, as it was the feeling which, on a former occasion, caused the disciples (Matt. xiv. 26) to cry out. Peter was anxiously impatient to satisfy himself of the truth of the women's report, and to meet once more his crucified Master: all other considerations were with him absorbed in this one. Now, such is precisely the conduct we should have expected from a man who seldom or never is offered to our notice in the course of the New Testament, (and it is very often that our attention is directed to him,) without some indication being given of his possessing a fearless, spirited, and impetuous character. Slight as this trait is, it marks the same indi-

vidual who ventured to commit himself to the deep, and "walk upon the water," whilst the other disciples remained in the boat; who "drew his sword, and smote the high priest's servant," whilst they were confounded and dismayed; who "girt his fisher's coat about him, and cast himself into the sea" to greet his Master when he appeared again, whilst his companions came in a little ship, dragging the net with fishes; who was ever most obnoxious to the civil power, so that when any of the disciples are cast into prison, there are we sure to find St. Peter. (See Acts v. 18, 29, xii. 3, xvi. 25.) Again, I say, I cannot imagine that designing persons, however wary they might have been, however much upon their guard, could possibly have given their fictitious narrative this singular air of truth, by the introduction of circumstances so unimportant, yet so consistent and harmonious.

XXI.

Acts, iv. 36.—"And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed *Barnabas*, a Levite, and *of the country of Cyprus*, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet."

I HAVE often thought that there is a harmony pervading every thing connected with Barnabas, enough in itself to stamp the Acts of the Apostles as a history of perfect fidelity. In the verse which I have placed at the head of this paragraph, we see that he was a native of *Cyprus;* a circumstance upon which a good deal of what I have to say respecting him will be found to turn.

1. First then, we discover him coming forward in behalf of Paul, whose conversion was suspected by the disciples at Jerusalem, with the air of a man who could vouch for his sincerity, by previous personal knowledge of him. How it was that he was better acquainted with the Apostle than the rest, the author of the Acts does not inform us. Cyprus, however, *the country of Barnabas*, was usually annexed to Cilicia, and formed an integral part of that province, whereof *Tarsus the country of Paul*, was the chief city.* It may seem fanciful, however, to suppose that at Tarsus, which was famous for its schools and the facilities it afforded for education,† the two Christian teachers might have laid the foundation

* Cicer. Epist. Familiar. lib. i. ep. vii. See also Maffei, Verona Illustrata, vol. i. p. 352.

† See Wetstein on Acts, ix. 11.

of their friendship in the years of their boyhood. Yet I cannot think this improbable.—That Paul collected his Greek learning (of which he had no inconsiderable share) in his native place, before he was removed to the feet of Gamaliel, is very credible; nor less so, that Barnabas should have been sent there from Cyprus, a distance of seventy miles only, as to the nearest school of note in those parts. Be that, however, as it may, what could be more natural than for an intimacy to be formed between them subsequently in Jerusalem, whither they had both resorted? They were, as we have seen, all but compatriots, and, under the circumstances, were likely to have their common friends. Neither may it be thought wholly irrelevant to observe, that when it was judged safe for Paul to return from Tarsus, where he had been living for a time to avoid the Greeks, Barnabas seized the opportunity of visiting that town in person, "to seek him," and bring him to Antioch. A journey which, as it does not seem to be necessary, was possibly undertaken by Barnabas partly for the purpose of renewing his intercourse with his early acquaintance.

2. Again, in another place we read, "and some of them were *men of Cyprus* and Cy-

rene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem. *And they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.*" (Acts, xi. 20.) Here no reason is assigned why Barnabas should have been chosen to go to Antioch, and acquaint himself with the progress these new teachers were making amongst the Grecians; but we may observe, that "*some of them were men of Cyprus;*" and having learned elsewhere that *Barnabas was of that country also*, we at once discover the propriety of despatching him, above all others, to confer with them on the part of the church at Jerusalem.

3. Again, when, at a subsequent period, Paul and Barnabas went forth together to preach unto the Gentiles, we perceive that they "departed unto Seleucia, *and from thence sailed to Cyprus.*" (xiii. 4.) And further, in a second journey, after Paul in some heat had parted company with them, we read that Barnabas and Mark again "*sailed unto Cyprus.*" (xv. 39.) This was precisely what

we might expect. Barnabas naturally enough chose to visit his own land before he turned his steps to strangers. Yet all this, satisfactory as it is in evidence of the truth of the history, we are left by the author of the Acts of the Apostles to gather for ourselves, by the apposition of several perfectly unconnected passages.

4. Nor is this all. "And some days after, (so we read, ch. xv.) Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who *departed from them from Pamphylia*, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and *so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus.*"

A curious chain of consistent narrative may be traced throughout the whole of this passage. The cause of the contention between Paul and Barnabas has been already noticed by Paley; I need not therefore do more than call to my reader's mind (as that excellent advocate of the truth of Christianity has done)

the passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, iv. 10, where it is casually said, that "*Marcus was sister's son to Barnabas*"—a relationship most satisfactorily accounting for the otherwise extraordinary pertinacity, with which Barnabas takes up Mark's cause, in this dispute with Paul. Though anticipated in this coincidence, I was unwilling to pass it over in silence, because it is one of a series, which attach to the life of Barnabas, and render it, as a whole, a most consistent and complete testimony to the veracity of the Acts.

One circumstance more remains still to be noticed. Mark, it seems, in the former journey, "departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work." How did this happen? The explanation, I think, is not difficult. Paul and Barnabas are appointed to go forth and preach. Accordingly they hasten to Seleucia, the nearest sea-port to Antioch, where they were staying, and taking with them John or Mark, "*sail to Cyprus.*"—xiii. 4. Since Barnabas was a Cypriote, it is probable that his nephew Mark was the same, or, at any rate, that he had friends and relations in that island. How reasonable then is it to suppose, that in joining himself to Paul and Barnabas in the out-

set of their journey, he was partly influenced by a very innocent desire to visit his kindred, his connexions, or perhaps his birth-place, and that having achieved this object, he landed with his two companions in Pamphylia, and so returned forthwith to Jerusalem. And this supposition (it may be added) is strengthened by the expression applied by St. Paul to Mark, "that he went not with them *to the work*"—as if in the particular case, the voyage to Cyprus did not deserve to be considered even the beginning of their labors, being more properly a visit of choice to kinsfolk and acquaintance, or to a place at least having strong local charms for Mark.

XXII.

Acts, vi. 1.—"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of *the Grecians against the Hebrews*, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2.—"Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word

of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom ye may appoint over this business."

5.—" And the saying pleased the whole multitude—and they chose *Stephen*, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and *Philip*, and *Procharus*, and *Nicanor*, and *Timon*, and *Parmenas*, and *Nicolas*, a proselyte of Antioch."

In this passage, I perceive a remarkable instance of consistency without design. There is a murmuring of the *Grecians* against the *Hebrews*, on account of what they considered an unfair distribution of the alms of the church. Seven men are appointed to redress the grievance. No mention is made of their country or connexions. The multitude of the disciples is called together, and by them the choice is made. No other limitation is spoken of in the commission they had to fulfil, than that the men should be of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost. Yet it is probable, (and here lies the coincidence,) that these deacons were all of the party aggrieved, *for their names are all Grecian.*

It is difficult to suppose this accidental. There must have been Hebrews enough fitted for the office. Yet Grecians alone seem to have been appointed. Why this should be so, St. Luke does not say, does not even hint. We gather from him that the Grecians thought themselves the injured party; and we then draw our own conclusions, that the church having a sincere wish to maintain harmony, and remove all reasonable ground of complaint, chose as advocates for the Greeks, those, who would naturally feel for them the greatest interest, and protect their rights with a zeal that should be above suspicion.

XXIII.

ACTS, xxiv. 26.—"He (Felix) hoped *that money should have been given him of Paul*, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

IT is observed by Lardner,* that Felix, (it might be thought,) could have small hopes of

* Vol. i. p. 27, 8vo. edition.

receiving money from such a prisoner as Paul, had he not recollected his telling him on a former interview, that "after many years he *came to bring alms to his nation, and offerings.*"—Hence he probably supposed, that the alms might not yet be all distributed, or if they were, that a public benefactor would soon find friends to release him.

The observation is curious, and in confirmation of its truth, I will add, that the personal appearance of Paul, when he was brought before Felix, was certainly not such as would give the governor reason to believe that he had wherewithal to purchase his own freedom, but quite the contrary. For a passage in the Acts, (xxii. 28,) certainly conveys very satisfactory, though indirect, evidence that the apostle wore poverty in his looks, at the very period in question. When Lysias, the chief captain at Jerusalem, had been apprized that he was a Roman, he could scarcely give credit to the fact; and, being further assured of it by Paul himself, he said, "with a great sum obtained I this freedom," manifestly implying a suspicion of Paul's veracity, whose appearance bespoke no such means of procuring citizenship. The cupidity, therefore, of Felix, was no doubt excited, as has been said, by

recollecting the errand on which his prisoner had come so lately to Jerusalem.

And this, moreover, furnishes the true explanation of the orders which Felix (very far from a merciful or indulgent officer) gave to the keeper of Paul, "to let him have liberty, *and to forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him*," a free admission of his friends being necessary, in order that they might furnish him with the ransom.

It is true that there is no coincidence here between independent writers; but surely every unprejudiced mind must admit, that there is an extremely nice, minute and undesigned harmony between the speech of Paul and the subsequent conduct of Felix; though the cause and effect are so far from being traced by the author of the Acts, that it may be doubted whether he saw any connexion subsisting between them. Surely, I repeat, such a harmony must convince us that it is no fictitious or forged narrative that we are reading, but a true and very accurate detail of an actual occurrence.

XXIV.

ACTS, xxvii. 5.—"And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found *a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy.*"

10.—"Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the *lading* (τοῦ φόρτου) and ship, but also of our lives."

38.—"And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out *the wheat* (τὸν σῖτον) into the sea."

IT has been remarked I think with justice, that the circumstantial details contained in this chapter of the shipwreck cannot be read without a conviction of their truth. I have never seen, however, the following coincidence in some of these particulars taken notice of in the manner it deserves. In my opinion it is very satisfactory, and when combined with a paragraph on the same subject, which will be found in the next section, (No. XVIII.,) establishes the fact of St. Paul's voyage beyond all reasonable doubt.

The ship into which the centurion removed Paul, and the other prisoners at Myra, was *a ship of Alexandria* that was *sailing into Italy*. It was evidently a merchant-vessel, for mention is made of its *lading*. The nature of the lading, however, is not *directly* stated. It was capable of receiving Julius and his company, and was bound right for them. This was enough, and this was all that St. Luke cares to tell. Yet, in verse 38, we find, by the merest chance, of what its cargo consisted. The furniture of the ship, or its "tackling," as it is called, was thrown overboard in the early part of the storm; but the freight was naturally enough kept till it could be kept no longer, and then we discover for the first time that it was *wheat*—"*the wheat* was cast into the sea."

Now it is a notorious fact that Rome was in a great measure supplied with corn from Alexandria—that in times of scarcity the vessels coming from that port were watched with intense anxiety, as they approached the coast of Italy*—that they were of a size not inferior to our line of battle ships,† a thing by no

* See Sueton. Nero. § 45.

† See Wetstein, Acts, xxvii. 6.

means usual in the vessels of that day—and accordingly that such an one might well accommodate the centurion and his numerous party, in addition to its own crew and lading.

There is a very singular air of truth in all this. The several detached verses at the head of this number tell a continuous story; but it is not perceived till they are brought together. The circumstances drop out one by one at intervals in the course of the narrative, unarranged, unpremeditated, thoroughly incidental; so that the chapter might be read twenty times, and their agreement with one another and with contemporary history be still overlooked. But if the account of the voyage, as far as relates to the change of ship, the tempest, the disastrous consequences, &c. is found, on being tried by a test which the writer of the Acts could never have contemplated, to be an unquestionable fact, how can the rest, which does not admit of the same scrutiny, be set aside as unworthy of credit?—for instance, that Paul actually foretold the danger—that again, in the midst of it, he foretold the final escape, and that an angel had declared to him God's pleasure, that, for his sake, not a soul

should perish? I see no alternative, but to receive all this nothing doubting; unless we consider St. Luke to have mixed up fact and fiction in a manner the most artful and insidious. Yet who can read the Acts of the Apostles and come to such a conclusion?

SECOND SECTION,

CONTAINING UNDESIGNED COINCIDENCES BETWEEN THE EVANGELISTS AND JOSEPHUS.

As in the former section it was my object to establish the truth of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, by instances of undesigned coincidence to be found in them, *when compared with themselves or one another*, so, in this section, do I intend to follow up the argument, by other instances of undesigned coincidence between *those writings and Josephus*. The subject has been treated, but not exhausted, by Lardner and Paley, the latter of whom indeed did not profess to do more than epitomise that part of the "Credibility of the Gospel history" which considers the works of the Jewish historian. Josephus was born A. D. 37, and therefore must have been long the contemporary of some of the apostles. For my purpose, it matters little, or nothing, whether we reckon him a believer in Chris-

tianity or not; whether he had, or had not, seen the records of the Evangelists. Since the examples of agreement between him and them, which I shall produce, will be such as are evidently without contrivance, the result of veracity in both. Still it is a matter of curiosity to know whether his evidence is to be received as that of an enemy or friend, and I shall therefore venture to say a few words on this head before I proceed further. Nothing is more necessary, towards ascertaining the genuineness of a single passage or sentiment ascribed to an author, than to be possessed of the general spirit and views with which he writes. I think a due regard to this, will give us every reason to believe that the passage concerning Jesus Christ, now to be found in the copies of Josephus, is spurious.*

That he wrote with an eye to Gentile readers, no man at all conversant with his works will deny. On all occasions he cultivates the good opinion of the Romans, amongst whom he lived. He is careful to give them no cause of offence, by shocking a prejudice, or correcting an error. He seems more disposed to compromise than dispute a point—to make concessions than to incur reproach—to

* Antiq. xviii. c. 4. § 3.

conceal his own belief than to do violence to theirs. Thus, when he relates the history of the Flood, and of the extreme age of the patriarchs, he cautiously adds, "but on these matters let every man judge for himself" (Ant. b. i. c. 3)—as if what he had said might seem adverse to the notions of a Roman. So again, having described the passage of Moses through the Red Sea, he endeavors to reconcile his heathen friends to the fact, by saying that Alexander experienced a similar miracle, an arm of the sea in Pamphylia having made way for him and his army when he was marching against the Persians. (Ant. ii. 16. 6.) Warburton, who has touched upon this subject in his usual masterly manner, (Div. Leg. v. iii. p. 110, 4to.) considers the omission in Josephus of the history of the Golden Calf, to be accounted for by the unwillingness of that author to expose the folly and grossness of his nation to the Gentiles, whose favorable opinion he was courting. In like manner, he speaks of Fate as the arbiter of events, not in the language of a Christian, not in the language of an uncompromising Jew, but rather "mediis ceu natus Athenis." (Ant. viii. 15. 6.) Again, with what an unworthy apology (as it were) for mentioning

them to the wise men of Rome, does he repeat some of the prophecies of Daniel: "For my part, I have written that which I have received and read, but if any man thinks differently, I leave him at liberty to enjoy his own opinion." (Ant. x. 11. § 7.) On the subject of the immortality of the soul he is equally courteous. After relating certain dreams of Archelaus, he thus proceeds:—"These things I have thought worthy of being mentioned, because they tend to confirm a belief in the immortality of the soul, and in the providence of God; but if any one holds them to be incredible, let him do so, only let him not censure others who would make them auxiliary to virtue." (Ant. xvii. 13. 5.) In the author of these and the like passages, I seem to discover a man most solicitous to stand well with the Romans amongst whom he dwelt—most careful to give them no cause of offence—most tender towards their failings—most diffident in advancing even truths, which might minister occasion of strife, contention, or dispute. How then could such a man speak so openly and so reverently of Christ and his disciples, (as the reputed paragraph in the Antiquities would make him speak) knowing all the while, that by the Romans

they were held in the most sovereign contempt? Would he have been the person to say, that this despised Jesus "was a wise man, if indeed it were lawful to call him a man—a worker of miracles—a teacher of the *truth*"—that he was nevertheless condemned to the cross by Pilate (a *Roman* governor be it remembered)—that he arose again the third day—and that from him sprung the sect of Christians, which were even then in existence? (Ant. xviii. 3. 3.) Surely such a passage as this would not have been likely to recommend him to his friends at Rome, who reckoned Christianity "a pernicious superstition;" (Tacit. Annal. 15. c. 44;) and confounded its followers with Jews, a race whom they ever abhorred. (Tacit. Hist. 5. 8.) Nor is this all. Is it credible that Josephus would have spoken of Herod as a man beloved of God (which he does more than once) and under His special protection, if he had been, in any sense of the word, a believer in Christ, whom that same Herod had taken every pains to destroy in his infancy? (Ant. xiv. c. 15. § 11.) Would he have passed over in silence the illustrious prophecy in Isaiah of the Virgin's child; led to it as he was by the history of the expedition of the two kings against Je-

rusalem, which he faithfully describes, and which gave occasion to that prophecy? (Ant. ix. c. 12.) Would he have asserted that the oracle which proclaimed the advent of a Prince about that period who was to rule over the earth merely related to Vespasian, who was elected emperor whilst in Judea? (Bel. Jud. vi. 5. 4.) I shall omit all consideration of the passage which speaks of the death of James, "the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ;" (Ant. xx. 8. 1;) because, though we should allow it to be genuine, it proves nothing as to the creed of Josephus. Neither shall I stay to examine his testimony to the character of John the Baptist; for though that is probably his own, it is not to our purpose, since many Jews who did not believe in Christ, nevertheless believed John to be a prophet, and whose fate therefore it is natural enough to find recorded by a Jewish historian.

From all these circumstances, I conclude that the evidence of Josephus is not the evidence of a friend to Christianity, and therefore that, for the object I use it, it is above suspicion:—that is, coincidences between him and the Evangelists, if any such there are, must be undesigned. Still, as I have said, all this is argument *ex abundanti*, curious

rather than necessary; since, if we allow him to be a Christian, if we even allow him to have seen the writings of the Evangelists, he will nevertheless be an independent witness, as far as he goes, provided his corroborations of the Gospel be clearly unpremeditated and incidental. In short, he will then be received like St. Mark or St. John, as a partisan indeed; but yet as a partisan who, upon cross-examination, confirms both his own statements and those of his colleagues.

1. Before I bring forward *individual* examples of coincidence between Josephus and the Evangelists, I cannot help remarking the effect which the writings of the former have, when *taken together and as a whole*, in convincing us of the truth of gospel history. No man, I think, could rise from a perusal of the latter books of the Antiquities, and the account of the Jewish war, without a very strong impression, that the state of Judea, civil, political and moral, as far as it can be gathered from the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, is pourtrayed in these latter with the greatest accuracy, with the strictest attention to all the circumstances of the place and the times. It is impossible to impart this conviction to my readers in a paragraph; the nature of the

case does not admit of it; it is the result of a thousand little facts, which it would be difficult to detach from the general narrative, and which, considered separately, might seem frivolous and fanciful. We close the pages of Josephus with the feeling that we have been reading of a country, which, for many years before its final fall, had been the scene of miserable anarchy and confusion; every where do we meet with open acts of petty violence, or the secret workings of plots, conspiracies, and frauds—the laws ineffectual, or very partially observed, and very wretchedly administered—oppression on the part of the rulers—amongst the people faction, discontent, seditions, tumults—robbers infesting the very streets, and most public places of resort, wandering about in arms, thirsting for blood no less than spoil, assembling in troops to the dismay of the more peaceable citizens, and with difficulty put down by military force;—society, in fact, altogether out of joint. Such would be our view of the condition of Judea, as collected from Josephus.

Now let us turn to the New Testament; which, without professing to treat about Judea at all, nevertheless, by glimpses, by notices scattered, uncombined, never intended

for such a purpose, actually conveys to us the very counterpart of the picture in Josephus. For instance, let us observe the character of the parables; stories evidently in many cases, and probably in most cases, taken from passing events, and adapted to the occasions on which they were delivered. In how many may be traced scenes of disorder, of rapine, of craft, of injustice, as if such scenes were but too familiar to the experience of those to whom they were addressed! We hear of a "man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and falling among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." (Luke, x. 30.) Of another, who planted a vineyard, and sent his servants to receive the fruits; but the "husbandmen took those servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another." (Matt. xxi. 35.) Of a "judge, which feared not God nor regarded man," and who avenged the widow only "lest by her continual coming she should weary him." (Luke, xviii. 2.) Of a steward, "who was accused unto the rich man of having wasted his goods," and who, by taking further liberties with his master's property, secured himself a retreat into the houses of his lord's debtors, "when he should

be put out of the stewardship." (Luke, xvi. 1.) Of "the coming of the Son of Man," like that of a thief in the night, whose approach was to be watched, if the master would "not suffer his house to be broken up." (Matt. xxiv. 43.) Of a "kingdom divided against itself being brought to desolation." Of a "city or house divided against itself not being able to stand." (Matt. xii. 25.) Of the necessity of "binding the strong man" before "entering into his house and spoiling his goods." (Matt. xii. 29.) Of the folly of "laying up for ourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." (Matt. vi. 19.) Of the enemy who had maliciously sown tares amongst his neighbor's wheat, "and went his way." (Matt. xiii. 25.) Of the man who found a treasure in another's field, and cunningly sold all that he had, and "bought that field." (Matt. xiii. 44.) These instances may suffice. Neither is it to the parables only that we must look for our proofs. Many historical incidents in the Gospels and Acts speak the same language. Thus when Christ would "have entered into a village of the Samaritans," they would not receive him, upon which his disciples James and John, who no doubt

partook in the temper of the times, proposed "that fire should be commanded to come down from heaven and consume them." (Luke, ix. 54.) Again, when Christ had offended the people of Nazareth by his preaching, they made no scruple "of rising up and thrusting him out of the city, and leading him unto the brow of the hill whereon the city was built, that they might cast him down headlong;" (Luke, iv. 29;) and, on another occasion, after he had been speaking in the temple at Jerusalem, "the Jews took up stones to stone him," but he "escaped out of their hand." (John, x. 31.) Again, we are told of certain "Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." (Luke, xiii. 1.) And when our Lord was at last seized, it was by "a great multitude with swords and staves," (Matt. xxvi. 47,) as in a country where nothing but brute force could avail to carry a warrant into execution. So again, Barabbas, whom the Jews would have released instead of Jesus, was one "who lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection." (Mark, xv. 7.) And when he was at length crucified, it was between two *thieves*. Let us trace the times somewhat further, and

we shall discover no amendment, but rather the contrary; as we learn from Josephus was the case on the nearer approach to the breaking out of the war. Thus Stephen is tumultuously stoned to death. (Acts, vii. 58.) And "Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and taking men and women, committed them to prison." (viii. 3.) But when Saul's own turn came that he should be persecuted, what a continued scene of violence and outrage is presented to us! Turn we to the 21st, 22d, and 23d chapters of the Acts. It might be Josephus that is speaking in them. Paul, on his coming to Jerusalem, is obliged to have recourse to a stratagem to conciliate the people, because "the multitude would needs come together, for they would hear that he was come." Still it was in vain. A hue and cry is raised against him by a few persons who had known him in Asia, and forthwith "all the city is moved, and the people run together and take Paul, and draw him out of the temple." The Roman garrison gets under arms and hastens to rescue Paul; but still is it needful that "he be borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people." He makes his defence. They, however, "cry out, and cast off their clothes, and throw dust in the

air." He is brought before the council, and the "high priest commands them that stand by him to strike him on the mouth." He now, with much dexterity, divides his enemies, by declaring himself a Pharisee and a believer in the resurrection. This was enough to set them again by the ears; for then there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, —and such was its fury, that "the captain, fearing Paul should be pulled in pieces by them, commands his soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them." No sooner is he rescued from the multitude, than forty persons and more "bind themselves by a curse to kill him" when he should be next brought before the council. Intelligence of this plot, however, is conveyed to the captain of the guard, who determines to send him to Cæsarea, to Felix the governor. The escort necessary to attend this single prisoner to his place of destination is no less than four hundred and seventy men, horse and foot, and, as a further measure of safety and precaution, they are ordered to set out at the third hour of the night. All these things, I say, are in strict agreement with the state of Judea as it is represented by Josephus. And it might be added, that independently of such considera-

tion, an argument for the truth of the Gospels and Acts results from the harmony upon this point which prevails throughout them all: a circumstance which I might have dwelt upon in the former section, but which it will be enough to have noticed here.

But further, a perusal of the writings of Josephus leaves another impression upon our minds *that there was a very considerable intercourse between Judea and Rome*—to Rome we find causes and litigations very constantly referred—thither are the Jews perpetually resorting in search of titles and offices—there it is that they make known their grievances, explain their errors, supplicate pardons, set forth their claims to favor, and return their thanks. Neither are there wanting passages in the New Testament which would lead us to the same conclusion; rather however casually, by allusion, by an expression incidentally presenting itself, than by any direct communication on the subject. Hence may we discover, for instance, the propriety of that phrase so often occurring in the parables and elsewhere, of men going for various purposes, "*into a far country.*"

Thus we read that "the Son of Man is as a man taking a *far journey*, who left his house

and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." (Mark, xiii. 34.) And again, that a certain nobleman *went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.* (Luke, xix. 12.) And again, that the prodigal son, "gathered all together, and took his *journey into a far country*, and there wasted his substance in riotous living." (Luke, xv. 13.) And again, that "a certain householder planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and *went into a far country.*" (Matt. xxi. 33.) Moreover, it is probable that this political relationship of Judea to Rome, the seat of government from whence all the honors and gainful posts were distributed, suggested the use of those metaphors, which abound in the New Testament, of the "kingdom of heaven," of "seeking the kingdom of heaven," of "giving the kingdom of heaven," and the like. All I mean to affirm is this, that such allusions and such figures of speech would very naturally present themselves to a Teacher situated as the gospel represents Christ to have been—and therefore go to prove that such representation is the truth.

II.

MATT. ii. 3.—"When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born."

NOR was he yet satisfied; for he "*privily* called the wise men, and inquired of them *diligently* what time the star appeared." (*v.* 7.) And when they did not return from Bethlehem as he expected, he seems to have been still more apprehensive, "exceeding wroth." (*v.* 16.)

Such a transaction as this is perfectly agreeable to the character of Herod, as we may gather it from Josephus. He was always in fear for the stability of his throne and anxious to pry into futurity that he might discover whether it was likely to endure.

Thus we read in Josephus of a certain Essene, Manahem by name, who had foretold whilst Herod was yet a boy, that he was des-

tined to be a king. Accordingly, "when he was actually advanced to that dignity, and in the plenitude of his power, he sent for Manahem and *inquired of him how long he should reign.* Manahem did not tell him the precise period. Whereupon he questioned him further whether he should reign ten years or not? He replied, Yes, twenty, nay, thirty years; but he did not assign a limit to the continuance of his empire. With these answers Herod was satisfied, and giving Manahem his hand, dismissed him, and from that time he never ceased to honor all the Essenes." (Antiq. xv. 10. § 5.)

III.

MATT. ii. 22.—"But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither."

ON the death of Herod, Joseph was commanded to return to the land of Israel, and "he arose and took the young child" and went. However, before he began his journey, or whilst he was yet in the way, he was told that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the

room of his father Herod; on which he was afraid to go thither. Archelaus, therefore, must have been notorious for his cruelty (it should seem) *very soon indeed after coming to his throne.* Nothing short of this could account for the sudden resolution of Joseph to avoid him with so much speed.

Now it is remarkable enough, *that, at the very first passover after Herod's death, even before Archelaus had yet had time to set out for Rome,* to obtain the ratification of his authority from the emperor, he was guilty of an act of outrage and bloodshed, under circumstances above all others fitted to make it generally and immediately known. One of the last deeds of his father Herod, had been to put to death Judas and Matthias, two persons who had instigated some young men to pull down a golden eagle which Herod had fixed over the gate of the temple, contrary, as they conceived, to the law of Moses. The hapless fate of these martyrs to the law, excited great commiseration at the passover which ensued. The parties, however, who uttered their lamentations aloud were silenced by Archelaus, the new king, in the following manner:—

"He sent out all the troops against them, and ordered the horsemen to prevent those

who had their tents outside the Temple from rendering assistance to those who were within it, and to put to death such as might escape from the foot. *Three thousand men* did these cavalry slay, the rest betook themselves for safety to the neighboring mountains. Then Archelaus commanded proclamation to be made, that they should all retire to their own homes. So they went away, and *left the festival out of fear lest somewhat worse should ensue.*" (Antiq. b. xvii. ch. 9. § 3.)

We must bear in mind that, at the passover, Jews from all parts of the world were assembled; so that any event which occurred at Jerusalem during that great feast, would be speedily reported on their return to the countries where they dwelt. Such a massacre, therefore, at such a season, would at once stamp the character of Archelaus. The fear of him would naturally enough spread itself wherever a Jew was to be found; and, in fact, so well remembered was this, his first essay at governing the people, that several years afterwards it was brought against him with great effect, on his appearance before Cæsar at Rome.

It is the more probable, that this act of cruelty inspired Joseph with his dread of Ar-

chelaus, because that prince could not have been much known before he came to the throne; never having had any public employment, or indeed, future destination, like his half-brother, Antipater, whereby he might have discovered himself to the nation at large.*

IV.

MATT. xvii. 24.—"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received *tribute-money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes."

THE word which is translated, *tribute-money*, is in the original "*the didrachma*," of which indeed notice is given in the margin of our Version; and it is worthy of remark, that this tax seems not to have been designated by any *general* name, such for instance as tribute, custom, &c. but actually had the specific appellation of the "*didrachma*." Thus Josephus writes "Nisibis too is a city surrounded by the same river (the Euphrates); wherefore

* Lardner briefly alludes to this transaction, but has not made the best of his argument.—Vol. i. p. 14. 8vo. ed.

the Jews trusting to the nature of its position, deposited there the *didrachma*, which it is customary for each individual to pay to God; as well as their other offerings."—(Antiq. xviii. 10. § 1.)

There is something which indicates veracity in the Evangelist, to be correct in a trifle like this. He makes no mistake in the sum paid to the Temple, nor does he express himself by a general term, such as would have concealed his ignorance, but hits upon the exact payment that was made, and the name that was given it.

V.

MATT. XXVI. 5.—"But they said, Not on the *feast* day, lest there *be an uproar among the people*."

I HAVE already alluded to the insubordinate condition of *Judea* in general, about the period of our Lord's ministry. We have here an example of the feverish and irritable state of the *capital* itself, in particular, during the feast of the passover.

"The feast of the passover," says Jose-

phus, (who relates an event that happened some few years after Christ's death,) "being at hand, wherein it is our custom to use unleavened bread, and a great multitude being drawn together from all parts to the feast, Cumanus (the governor) *fearing that some disturbance might fall out amongst them, commands one cohort of soldiers to arm themselves and stand in the porticoes of the Temple, to suppress any riot which might occur, and this precaution the governors of Judea before him had adopted.*"—(Antiq. xx. 4. § 3.)

In spite, however, of these prudent measures, a tumult arose on this very occasion, in which, according to Josephus, twenty thousand Jews perished.

VI.

MARK, v. 1.—"And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the *country of the Gadarenes*," &c.

11.—"Now there were nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of *swine* feeding."

HERE it might at first seem that St. Mark had been betrayed into an oversight—for since

swine were held in abhorrence by the Jews as unclean, how (it might be asked) did it happen that a herd of them were feeding on the side of the sea of Tiberias?

The objection, however, only serves to prove yet more the accuracy of the Evangelist, and his intimate knowledge of the local circumstances of Judea, for on turning to Josephus, (Antiq. xvii. 13. § 4.) we find that "Turris Stratonis, and Sebaste, and Joppa, and Jerusalem, were made subject to Archelaus, but that Gaza, *Gadara*, and Hippos, *being Grecian cities*, were annexed by Cæsar to Syria." This fact, therefore, is enough to account for swine being found amongst the Gadarenes.

VII.

MARK, vi. 21.—"And when a convenient day was come, *that Herod on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee*, and when the daughter of Herodias came in and danced," &c.

IT is curious and worthy of remark, that a feast under exactly similar circumstances, is

incidentally described by Josephus, as made by Herod, the brother of Herodias, and successor of this prince in his government. "*Having made a feast on his birth day*, (writes Josephus,) *when all under his command partook of the mirth*, he sent for Silas," (an officer whom he had cast into prison for taking liberties with him,) and "offered him his freedom and a seat at the banquet." (Antiq. xix. 7. § 1.) This, I say, is a coincidence worth notice, because it proves that these *birth-day feasts* were observed in the family of Herod, and that it was customary to assemble the officers of government to share in them.

VIII.

MARK, xiv. 13.—"And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, *Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?*"

WHEN Cestius wished to inform Nero of the numbers which attended the passover at Jerusalem, he counted the victims and allowed *ten persons* to each head, "because a company not less than *ten* belong to every sacrifice, (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves,) and many are *twenty* in company." (B. J. vi. 9. § 3.)

Accordingly the gospel narrative is in strict conformity with this custom. When Christ goes up to Jerusalem to attend the passover for the last time, he is not described as running the chance of hospitality in the houses of any of his friends, because on this occasion the parties would be made up, and the addition of thirteen guests might be inconvenient, but he sends forth beforehand, from Bethany, most probably, two of his disciples to the city, with orders to engage a room, (a precaution very necessary where so many companies would be seeking accommodation,) and there eats the passover with his followers, a party of thirteen, which it appears was about the usual number.*

* See Whiston's Note upon Joseph. B. J. vi. 9. 3.

IX.

LUKE, ii. 42.—"And when *he was twelve years old*, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast."

I AM aware that commentators upon this text quote the Rabbins, to show that children of twelve years old, amongst the Jews, were considered to be entering the estate of manhood, (see Wetstein,) and that on this account it was that Jesus was taken at that age to the passover. Such may be the true interpretation of the passage. I cannot, however, forbear offering a conjecture which occurred to me in reading the history of Archelaus.

The birth of Christ probably preceded the death of Herod by a year and a half, or thereabout. (See Lardner, vol. i. p. 352. 8vo edit.) Archelaus succeeded Herod, and governed the country, it should seem, about ten years. "In the *tenth year* of Archelaus' reign, the chief governors among the Jews and Samaritans, unable any longer to endure his cruelty and tyranny, accused him before Cæsar." Cæsar upon this sent for him to Rome, and

"as soon as he came to Rome, when the Emperor had heard his accusers, and his defence, he banished him to Vienne in France, and confiscated his goods." (Antiq. xvii. c. 15.) The removal, therefore, of this obnoxious governor, appears to have been effected in our Lord's twelfth year. Might not this circumstance account for the parents of the child Jesus venturing to take him to Jerusalem at the passover when he was *twelve years old*, and not before? It was only because "Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of his father, Herod," that Joseph was afraid to go thither on his return from Egypt; influenced not merely by motives of personal safety, but by the consideration that the same jealousy which had urged Herod to take away the young child's life, might also prevail with his successor; for we do not find that any fears about himself or Mary withheld him from subsequently going to the passover, even during the reign of Archelaus, since it is recorded that "they went every year." I submit it, therefore, to my readers' decision, whether the same apprehensions for the life of the infant Jesus, which prevented Joseph from taking him into Judea, on hearing that Archelaus was king, did not, very probably, prevent

him from taking him up to Jerusalem, till he heard that Archelaus was deposed.

X.

LUKE, vi. 13.—"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose *twelve*, whom also he named Apostles."

x. 1.—"After these things the Lord appointed other *seventy* also, and sent them two and two before his face," &c.

THERE is something in the selection of these numbers which indicates veracity in the narrative. They were, on several accounts, favorite numbers amongst the Jews; the one (to name no other reason) being that of the Tribes, the other (taken roundly) that of the Elders. Accordingly we read in Josephus, that Varus, who held a post in the government under Agrippa, "called to him *twelve* Jews of Cæsarea, of the best character, and ordered them to go to Ecbatana, and bear this message to their countrymen who dwelt there: Varus hath heard that you intend to march against the king; but not believing the report,

he hath sent us to persuade you to lay down your arms, counting such compliance to be a sign that he did well not to give credit to those who so spake concerning you." "He also enjoined those Jews of Ecbatana to send *seventy* of their *principal* men to make a defence for them, touching the accusation laid against them. So when the *twelve* messengers came to their countrymen at Ecbatana, and found that they had no designs of innovation at all, they persuaded them to send the *seventy* also. Then went these *seventy* down to Cæsarea, together with the *twelve* ambassadors." (Life of Josephus, § 11.)

This is a very slight matter, to be sure, but it is still something to find the *subordinate* parts of a history in strict keeping with the habits of the people and of the age to which it professes to belong. The Evangelist might have fixed upon any other indifferent number for the apostles and first disciples of Jesus, without thereby incurring any impeachment of a want of veracity; and, therefore, it is the more satisfactory to discover marks of truth, where the absence of such marks would not have occasioned the least suspicion of falsehood.

XI.

LUKE, xxiii. 6.—"When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, *who himself* ALSO *was at Jerusalem at that time.*"

THE fair inference from this last clause is, that Jerusalem was not the common place of abode either of *Herod* or *Pilate.* Such is certainly the force of the emphatic expression, "who himself *also* was at Jerusalem at that time," applied, as it is, directly to Herod, but with a reference to the person of whom mention had been made in the former part of the sentence. The more circuitous this insinuation is, the stronger does it make for the argument. Now, that *Herod* did not reside at Jerusalem may be inferred from the following passage in Josephus.

"This king" (says he, meaning the Herod who killed James, the brother of John.—Acts, 12) "was *not at all like that Herod who reigned before him,* (meaning the Herod to

whom Christ was sent by Pilate,) for the latter was stern and severe in his punishments, and had no mercy on them he hated: confessedly better disposed towards the Greeks than the Jews: accordingly, of the cities of the strangers, some he beautified at his own expense with baths and theatres, and others with temples and corridores; but upon no Jewish city did he bestow the smallest decoration or the most trifling present. Whereas the latter Herod (Agrippa) was of a mild and gentle disposition, and good to all men. To strangers he was beneficent, but yet more kind to the Jews, his countrymen, with whom he sympathized in all their troubles. *He took pleasure therefore in constantly living at Jerusalem*, and strictly observed all the customs of his nation." (Antiq. xix. ch. 7. § 3.) Thus does it appear from the Jewish historian, that the Herod of the Acts was a *contrast* to the Herod in question, inasmuch as he loved the Jews, and *dwelt at Jerusalem*. Nor is St. Luke less accurate in representing *Pilate* to have been not resident at Jerusalem. Cæsarea seems to have been the place of abode of the Roman governors of Judea in general. (See Antiq. xviii. 4. § 1.—xx. 4. § 4.) Of Pilate it certainly was, for when the Jews had to

complain to him of the profanation which had been offered to their temple by the introduction of Cæsar's image into it, it was to Cæsarea that they carried their remonstrance. (Bell. Jud. ii. c. 9. § 2.)

It was probably the business of the passover which had brought Pilate to Jerusalem for a few days, the presence of the governor being never more needful in the capital than on such an occasion.

XII.

JOHN, iv. 15.—"The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me of that water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw."

IT seems, therefore, that there was no water in Sychar, and that the inhabitants had to come to this well to draw. Most likely it was at some little distance from the town; for the woman speaks of the labor of fetching the water as considerable; and Christ stopped short of the town at the well, because he "was wearied with his journey," whilst his disciples went on to buy bread.

Now, on the breaking out of the war with the Romans, some of the Samaritans assem-

bled on Mount Gerizim, *close to the foot of which* (be it observed) *was the city of Sychar placed.** Upon this, Vespasian determined to put some troops in motion against them: "For although all Samaria was provided with garrisons, yet did the number and evil spirit of those who had come together at Mount Gerizim give ground for apprehension; therefore, he sent Cerealis, the commander of the fifth Legion, with six hundred horse, and three thousand foot. Not thinking it safe, however, to go up the mountain and give them battle, because many of the enemy were on the higher ground, he encompassed all the circuit (ὑπώρειαν) of the mountain with his army, and watched them all that day. But it came to pass, that whilst *the Samaritans were now without water*, a terrible heat came on, for it was summer, and the people were unprovided with necessaries, *so that some of them died of thirst that same day*, and many others, preferring slavery to such a death, fled to the Romans." (Bell. Jud. iii. 7. § 32.)

The troops of Cerealis no doubt cut them off from the well of Sychar, which we perceive, from St. John, was the place to which

* Σίκιμα κειμένην πρὸς τῷ Γαριζεὶν ὄρει.—*Joseph. Antiq.* ii. 8. 6.

the neighborhood were compelled to resort. This is the more likely, inasmuch as the soldiers of the Roman general do not appear to have suffered from thirst at all on this occasion.

XIII.

JOHN, xix. 15.—"The chief priests answered, We have no *king* but *Cæsar*."

ALTHOUGH the Roman emperors never took the title of kings,* yet it appears from Josephus that they were so called by the Jews; and in further accordance with the writers of the New Testament, that historian commonly employs the term *Cæsar*, as sufficient to designate the reigning prince. Thus, when speaking of Titus, he says, "many did not so much as know that *the king* was in any danger." And again, shortly after, "the enemy indeed made a great shout at the boldness of *Cæsar*, and exhorted one another to rush upon him." (Bell. Jud. v. c. 2. § 2.)

This is a curious coincidence in popular phraseology, and such as bespeaks the writers

* For this remark I am indebted to Whiston.

of the New Testament to have been familiar with the scenes they describe, and the parties they introduce.

XIV.

Acts, ix. 36.—"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple, named Tabitha, *which by interpretation is called Dorcas.*"

It may be remarked, that Josephus, who (like St. Luke) wrote in Greek of things which happened in a country where Syriac was the common language, thinks fit to add a similar explanation when he alludes to this same proper name.

"They sent one John, who was the most bloody-minded of them all, to do that execution. This man was *also called the son of Dorcas, in the language of our country.*" (Bel. Jud. iv. 3. § 5.)

XV.

Acts, vi. 1.—"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied,

there arose *a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews*, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

In the first section, I found an instance of consistency without design in this passage, on comparing it with the context; I now find a second like instance, on comparing it with Josephus. It seems that when the disciples became more numerous, a jealousy began to discover itself between the Grecians and the Hebrews. The circumstance is casually mentioned by St. Luke, as the accident which gave occasion to the appointment of deacons; yet how strictly characteristic is it of the country and times in which it is said to have happened.

"There was a disturbance at Cæsarea," writes Josephus, "between the *Jews* and *Syrians* respecting the equal enjoyment of civil rights; the Jews laying claim to precedence, because Herod, who was a Jew, had founded the city; the Syrians, on the other hand, admitting this, but maintaining that Cæsarea was originally called the Tower of Straton, and did not then contain a single Jew." (Antiq. xx. 7. § 7.) In the end, the two par-

ties broke out into open war. This was when Felix was governor. On another occasion, under Florus, we read of 20,000 Jews perishing at Cæsarea by the hands of the Greek or Syrian part of the population. (Bel. Jud. ii. 18. 1.) And again, we are told that "fearful troubles prevailed throughout all Syria, *each city dividing itself into two armies*, and the safety of the one consisted in forestalling the violence of the other. Thus, the people passed their days in blood and their nights in terror." (Bel. Jud. ii. 15. 2.)

It is most improbable that the writer of the Acts, if he were making up a story, should have bethought himself of a circumstance at once so unimportant as this murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, and yet so truly descriptive of the people where his scene was laid? This little incident (the more trifling the better for our purpose) carries with it the strongest marks of truth; and, like the single watch-word, is a voucher for the general honesty of the party that utters it. Indeed, the establishment of one fact may be thought in itself to entail the credibility of many more. If it be *certain* that there was a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in

the daily ministration, then it is *probable* that there was a common fund out of which widows were maintained; that many sold their possessions to contribute to this fund; that it must have been a strong motive which could urge to such a disposal of their property; that no motive could be so likely as their conviction of the truth of Christianity; and that such a conviction could spring out of nothing so surely as the evidence of miracles. I do not say that all these matters *necessarily* follow from the certainty of the first simple fact, but I say that admitting it, they all follow in a train of very natural consequence.

XVI.

ACTS, XXV. 13.—"*And after certain days, King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.*"

THIS Agrippa (Agrippa Minor) had succeeded, by permission of Claudius, to the territories of his uncle, Herod; at least, Trachonitis, Batanæa and Abilene were confirmed to him. From this passage in the Acts, it appears, as might be expected, that he was anxious to

be well with the Roman government, and accordingly that he lost no time in paying his respects to Festus, the new representative of that government in Judea. It is a singular and minute coincidence well worth our notice, that Josephus records instances of this same Agrippa's obsequiousness to Roman authorities, of precisely the same kind. "About this time, says he, *King Agrippa went to Alexandria, to salute Alexander, who had been sent by Nero to govern Egypt.*" (Bel. Jud. ii. 15. § 1.)

And again, (what is yet more to our purpose,) we read, on another occasion, *that Bernice accompanied Agrippa in one of these visits of ceremony;* for, having appointed Varus to take care of their kingdom in their absence, "*they went to Berytus, with the intention of meeting Gessius (Florus) the Roman governor of Judea.*" (Jos. Life, § 11.)

This is a case singularly parallel to that in the Acts; for Gessius Florus held the very same office, in the same country, as Felix.

XVII.

ACTS, XXV. 23.—"And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and *Bernice*, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at Festus's commandment Paul was brought forth."

IT might seem extraordinary that *Bernice* should be present on such an occasion—that a woman should take any share in an affair, one would have supposed, foreign to her, and exclusively belonging to the other sex. But here again we have another proof of the veracity and accuracy of the sacred writings. For when Agrippa *(the same Agrippa)* endeavored to combat the spirit of rebellion which was beginning to show itself amongst the Jews, and addressed them in that famous speech given in Josephus, which throws so much light on the power and provincial polity of the Romans, he first of all "*placed his sister Bernice* (the same Bernice) *in a conspicuous situation*, upon the house of the Asamonæans, which was above the gallery, at the passage to the upper city, where the

bridge joined the Temple to the gallery;" and then he spoke to the people. And when his oration was ended, we read that "*both he and his sister shed tears*, and so repressed much violence in the multitude." (Bel. Jud. ii. 16. § 3.)

There is another passage, occurring in the life of Josephus, which is no less valuable; for it serves to show yet further the political importance of Bernice, and how much she was in the habit of acting with Agrippa on all public occasions. One Philip, who was governor of Gamala and the country about it, under Agrippa, had occasion to communicate with the latter, probably on the subject of his escape from Jerusalem, where he had been recently in danger, and of his return to his own station. The transaction is thus described:—

"He wrote to *Agrippa and Bernice*, and gave the letters to one of his freedmen to carry to Varus, who at that time was procurator of the kingdom, which *the sovereigns* (i. e. the king and his sister-wife) had intrusted him withal, while *they* were gone to Berytus to meet Gessius. When Varus had received these letters of Philip, and had learned that he was in safety, he was very uneasy

at it, supposing that he should appear useless to the *sovereigns* (βασιλεῦσιν) now Philip was come." (Josephus's Life, § 11.)

XVIII.

ACTS, xxviii. 11.—"And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and *we came the next day to Puteoli.*"

PUTEOLI then, it should seem, was the destination of this vessel from *Alexandria.* Now, we may collect from the independent testimony of the Jewish historian, *that this was the port of Italy to which ships from Egypt and the Levant in those times commonly sailed.* Thus when Herod Agrippa went from Judea to Rome, for the purpose of paying his court to Tiberius and bettering his fortune, he directed his course first to *Alexandria,* for the sake of visiting a friend, and then crossing the Mediterranean, *he landed at Puteoli.*"

(Antiq. xviii. 7. § 4.) Again, when Herod the Tetrarch, at the instigation of Herodias, undertook a voyage to Rome, to solicit from Caligula a higher title, which might put him upon a level with his brother-in-law, Herod Agrippa, the latter pursued him to Italy and *both of them* (says Josephus) *landed at Dichæarchia*, (Puteoli,) and found Caius at Baiæ." (Antiq. xviii. 8. § 2.)

Take a third instance. Josephus had himself occasion, when a young man, to go to Rome. On his passage, the vessel in which he sailed foundered, but a ship from Cyrene picked him up, together with eighty of his companions; "*and having safely arrived* (says he) *at Dichæarchia, which the Italians call Puteoli*, I became acquainted with Aliturus," &c. (Life, § 3.)

In this last passage there is a singular resemblance to the circumstances of St. Paul's voyage. Josephus, though not going to Rome as a prisoner who had himself appealed from Felix to Cæsar, was going to Rome on account of two friends, whom Felix thought proper to send to Cæsar's judgment-seat—he suffered shipwreck—he was forwarded by another vessel coming from Africa—and finally he landed at Puteoli.

CONCLUSION.

I AM not without hope that the arguments which I have thus advanced may be thought enough to show the *reasonableness* of believing in that Gospel whereunto we have been all baptized; and the hardihood (not to use a stronger word) of those who laugh us to scorn as the followers of "cunningly devised fables." But, useful as such arguments are for effecting our conviction of the truth of Christianity, still must we ever bear in mind that more than mere conviction arising from reasonable proof, is required to make our faith a saving faith. The devils may believe the *facts* of the Gospel, as one of the homilies of our Church asserts, and yet they are but devils. More than a mere acquiescence of the mind in the veracity of Holy Writ is demanded, to make up that lively faith which shall strengthen us against temptations, and support us in distress,—which shall make us more than conquerors in this life, whatever may be our troubles,—which shall induce us to repose

perfect confidence in the providence of God, however we may be cast down,—to bow with submission to his decrees, however mysterious they may seem,—to despise the things which are seen and temporal, as compared with the things which are not seen and eternal,—to look steadfastly in the course of our pilgrimage to "that city which hath foundations." He who counts upon all this, resulting from the conviction of his understanding employed on the evidences of Christianity, counts upon it in vain—"for with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. x. 10.) God has not thought fit that the evidence of the Gospel should be of a nature so overwhelming as to leave no room whatever for dispute, no choice but to follow its commands. How, indeed, could a blessing be attached to a conviction which would be as irresistible as the impression of an object of sense; or what trial of our virtue could this life afford, when we should walk, if not "by sight," at least by a guidance as peremptory? Still, evidence enough God has given, to prevail upon our understandings, and to lead us to a *lively* faith, provided the workings of our understandings be seconded by those other means on which God has thought fit to make

a lively faith in part depend. Now one of those means is *prayer*. The Almighty has determined that we shall acknowledge our dependence on Him for faith, as for every other good gift—has determined, that our reason shall not altogether satisfy us without succor, lest we be exalted in our minds. "He that lacks wisdom, *let him ask it of God*," is the advice of St. James. (i. 5.) "*Lord, increase our faith*," is the prayer of the Apostles. (Luke xvii. 5.) "Lord, I believe, *help thou mine unbelief*," is the petition of the afflicted father of the possessed child, and it was heard and answered. (Mark, ix. 24.) And when Peter expressed to Christ his belief in him, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: *for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven:*" (Matt. xvi. 17:) that is, it was not merely by evidence working on the understanding through the senses, that thou wast convinced, but by the immediate grace of God.

Another means is a *moral life*—for it is no less true that the life influences the faith, than that the faith influences the life. Perhaps the weakness of their faith, which so many acknowledge, may not unfrequently spring

from a neglect of this wholesome truth. Such men may think that leading a careless, an ungodly, a sensual life, can make no difference in their faith—that the life cannot affect *that* —that faith is to be determined exclusively by proof, and not by practice. Reasonable, however, it is, and scriptural too, to maintain that it is determined by *both*. "We must not forget our nature," says Pascal, speaking upon this very subject, "we are body as well as spirit; and hence it comes to pass, that the instrument by which conviction is produced, is not demonstration only. How few things are there demonstrated? Demonstrations act only on the mind; but *custom* produces our strongest convictions—it engages the *senses*, and they incline the understanding, without even giving it time for thought. Who has ever demonstrated the certainty of to-morrow's light, or of our own death—and yet what is more universally believed; *Custom*, therefore, persuades us of it. Custom makes so many men Pagans and Turks, and so many artisans and soldiers. It is true that we ought not to begin with custom in our inquiries after truth, but we must have recourse to it when once we have discovered where truth is, in order to refresh and invigorate our belief, which every

passing hour inclines us to forget; for a regular train of arguments cannot always be present to our minds. We want something more easy —a *habit* of believing, which, without violence or art or argument, compels our assent, and so inclines all our powers towards it that we naturally fall into it. It will not be enough, that we are willing to believe any thing upon force of *conviction*, when our *senses* are soliciting us to believe the direct contrary. The two parts of ourselves must always proceed in concert; the *understanding*, by those arguments which it is sufficient once in our lives to have understood: the *senses*, by habit, and by not being suffered to throw their weight into the opposite scale."

More I might add from the valuable Chapter of the Thoughts of Pascal, which has supplied me with this long extract. It is the seventh, and well deserves the attention of every man, for the useful helps it suggests to the cultivation and improvement of a sound and vigorous faith.

Neither is this notion of improving faith by practice *reasonable* only, it is *scriptural* also. Thus, to take a more enlarged view of the subject; the law, which was preparing the way for the gospel, was almost entirely *prac-*

tical, inclining the minds of men, by its moral injunctions and their sanctions, to faith in the existence of one just and holy God, and preparing them for the reception of the great expiatory sacrifice, by its types, rites and ceremonies. Again, the preaching of John the Baptist, who was our Saviour's more immediate forerunner, was still *practical:* "The kingdom of heaven is at hand: bring *forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*" The preaching of our Lord himself, though much more mixed with doctrine, was in a great measure *practical* also, calculated to reform the lives of his hearers, as a means of leading them to a right faith and knowledge of the truth; and it was not till the scheme of religion had been thus advanced; it was not till the *practice* of Christian duties had been thoroughly taught, that its *doctrines* were amply and at much length set forth in the Epistles of St. Paul and others. So perfect an example does the course of revelation (if we take a general survey of it) offer, that men *must do* "*the will* of God, and then they will *know of the doctrine.*" (John, vii. 17.) It is not however by arguments thus *remotely* drawn from revelation, that the proposition I am maintaining requires to be established.

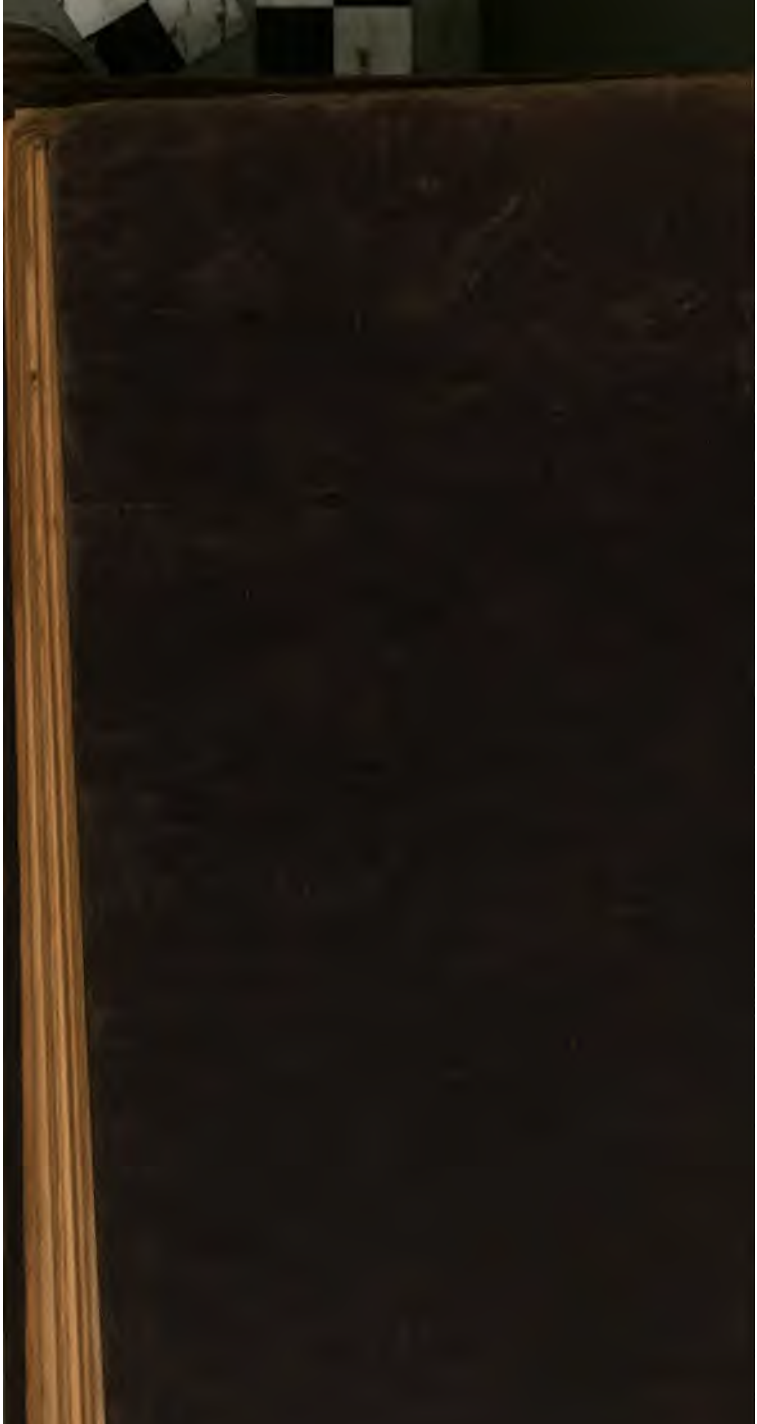
That a good life shall be productive of a right faith (no matter how this may be brought about) we have the word of God expressly declaring. A moral life, therefore, (I mean a life agreeable to the dictates of scripture,) is not merely to be viewed as a *natural* means of confirming our faith, but as a means by way of *divine blessing*. There is a blessing annexed to it on the same authority as there is a blessing annexed to baptism. Mark, for instance, the reason which the Almighty is pleased to give for his comparatively unreserved communication with Abraham, touching the salvation of mankind by the future Messiah—"And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I shall do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed by him?" Now, what was there in the character of Abraham which should induce the Almighty in his own good pleasure to inform him of the great dispensation he had in hand, whilst others were still left to sit in darkness? Why should not God hide from him the thing that he would do? "For I know him," saith the Lord, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the

Lord, to do justice and judgment." It was Abraham's *good life*, it should seem, that disposed the Almighty to enlighten his understanding and enlarge his faith. Again, why was Cornelius chosen as the first of the Gentiles on whom the light of the gospel was permitted to shine out? Apparently this special favor was vouchsafed him, because "he was a devout man and one that feared God, with all his house, and whose prayers and alms had come up as a memorial before God." He was already a good liver, and was thus prepared for the reception of a better faith and sounder doctrine.

Nor is it on *examples* alone that the argument rests. For besides that passage to which I have already alluded, than which nothing can be more express, "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God"—besides this passage, I say, there is an explicit covenant recorded by St. John, wherein our Lord agrees to make a right faith follow a righteous life. "He that hath my commandments and *keepeth them*," says he, (the condition must be marked,) "he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and *manifest myself unto him*." (John, xiv. 21.) A

promise can scarcely be conveyed in words more definite and distinct.

It may be, then, from the too common neglect of these latter auxiliaries of faith, that it is so frequently found the least *lively*, amongst those with whom (did it depend on evidence only) it ought to be most effectual of all. Frequently is faith found dead in operation amongst those who have had the best opportunities from knowledge, and the habitual exercise of their reason, to acquaint themselves with the testimonies to the truth of revelation, and who are ready to admit that those testimonies are satisfactory. Whilst, on the other hand, under the cottage roof, perhaps, (where the evidences have been little examined,) but where prayer and a life agreeable to scripture have been resorted to, may the minister of God discover the active workings of a faith the most lively: not exhibiting itself in vapid and heartless exclamations of belief, but in the more sober fruits of patience under sickness—trust in God under poverty—courage to meet the fever and contagion for a neighbor's relief—gratitude for mercies received, without a question but that from God's hands they immediately flow. These and the like fruits of a steadfast faith,

I repeat, may be often met with in the thatched cottage of our land, chiefly resulting from God's blessing on a moral life, and the outpouring of prayer, so that even the spiritual guide of the parish shall enter that poor man's doors, and stand beside his sick bed, with a feeling almost of envy at the delightful sincerity of the unlearned sufferer; reproach himself, that, though a master in Israel, he knoweth not these things in the same extent, and renew perhaps the slumbering flame of his own devotion at the hearth of his less highly gifted brother.

Nov. 28th